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Understanding teacher development: A case study of knowledge and
beliefs in English language teaching in Mexico

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**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
MARIA ESTHER LEMUS-HIDALGO
DEGREE OF DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION
UNDERSTANDING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF
KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN
MEXICO**

SUMMARY

This thesis reports on a case study that discusses the interconnection between the knowledge, beliefs and practices of teachers of English as a foreign language in a state university in Mexico. Previous research suggests that there is a knowledge base for teaching that is significant for teachers irrespective of the subject they teach. Research also indicates that teaching practices are shaped by teachers' beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of the learning process and the nature of the teaching act. Nevertheless, it appears that the development of language teachers tends to be focused on increasing the knowledge required for the teaching of English without recognising that teaching practices are also informed by the beliefs that teachers hold. The purpose of this case study was therefore to increase our understanding of how the knowledge and beliefs of the case study teachers intersected to inform their teaching practices, and to draw some conclusions that could be used to further English language teacher development.

The case study involved four teachers of English in a state university in Mexico. It was conducted from an interpretivist approach and drew on the perspectives of the participant teachers. The methods used were: observations and video recordings of classes; focus groups, interviews and conversations with the case study teachers; teachers' journals. The words and actions of the teachers were the units of the within-in case and cross-case analysis undertaken.

The findings of the study illustrate three main aspects: Firstly, teacher's knowledge plays a supporting role in their teaching practices and appears to be composed of different

knowledge categories that are not independent but interwoven. In addition, any category presupposes other knowledge categories since any of them implies knowledge covered by other categories. Secondly, teaching practices are not only informed by teachers' knowledge but also by their beliefs. Moreover, the study suggests that teachers' beliefs have a predominant role in their teaching since teachers claim to use only the knowledge in which they believe. Finally, the case study suggests that the learning and teaching experiences of the teachers are a major source of their knowledge and beliefs, and beliefs that are experientially engrained appear to be more influential than theoretically embraced beliefs.

The case study concludes that teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices interact and inform each other persistently in a dynamic process that could usefully be represented as a gear model of the relationships between the three elements. This model would illustrate the dynamic process more accurately since it represents them within a constant interaction process. It is also argued that the relations between the three elements are pertinent irrespective of the context of the study as this offers a frame of reference for other researchers and teacher educators interested in understanding the interconnection between teachers' practices and their knowledge and beliefs.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANUIES: Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior

BA in ELT: Bachelors degree in English Language Teaching

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

COPEEMS: Council of Evaluation of Preparatory schools

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EGAL-EIN: National exit exam for BA in ELT students

ELT: English Language Teaching

IMNRC: Mexican-North American Cultural Relations Institute

PCK: Pedagogical Content Knowledge

PENIEB: English in public primary schools program

TEFL: Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

TOEFL: Test of English as a foreign language

TLCAN: North American Free Trade Agreement

UNAM: Spanish acronym of National Autonomous University of Mexico

USA: United States of America

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language is the focus of this interpretivist case study conducted from an insider position in a state university in Mexico. It examines the knowledge, beliefs and language teaching practices of language teachers, considering all these aspects as a whole rather than as independent components. This case study has been constructed through the simultaneous study of four Mexican university teachers of English as a foreign language, taking into consideration their own perspectives on the phenomenon researched because from a subjective stance and as an interpretivist, I consider that people construct the world in different manners and with words and events that carry different meanings for each person (Thomas, 2011). The purpose of the study was to increase our understanding of the role of teachers' cognition, defined as "what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg, 2003, p. 81), in their teaching practices since a better understanding of the reasons behind teachers' practices could contribute to teacher development.

The initial motivation for this research was the perception developed from my position as a teacher educator in pre-service and in-service courses for teachers of English in higher education in Mexico that the type of teaching practices that teachers employed differs considerably. Since 1993, as part of a BA in English Language Teaching Program (BA in ELT), I have taught at least 250 students who were preparing to be teachers of English and I have observed a significant variation of teaching practices in spite of the fact that teachers have followed the same English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum. I also participated in the design and revision of this curriculum, which has a modularised structure. This type of curriculum appears to encourage the obtaining of pieces of information rather than the integration of knowledge (Korthagen, 2000), which could be one of the reasons behind teaching practice variation. Additionally, Borg (2003) notes that teachers' knowledge,

beliefs and personal convictions are the reasons teachers offer as explanations for their teaching practices. When asking student-teachers about their reasons for their teaching practices, they have supported their teaching actions by talking not only about their knowledge but also about their beliefs about teaching and learning processes. Therefore, teachers' beliefs might also be a reason in the variation of their teaching practices.

The aim of the case study was to increase our understandings of how knowledge and beliefs about the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) intersect to inform the practices of Mexican teachers of EFL at degree level. This study built on the critical analysis study (CAS) also conducted for the International Doctorate in Education. The case study has been developed with four teachers who teach English as a foreign language to undergraduates at a state university in Mexico, aiming to answer the following questions:

1. What forms of knowledge do the case study teachers draw on in their classroom practices?
2. What are the case study teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning?
3. How do the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of the case study teachers interact?
4. Is it possible to draw any implications for the education of English language teachers in higher education in Mexico from this case study?

Research suggests that there is a knowledge base for teaching that is significant for teachers and informs their practice irrespective of the subject they teach (Johnston and Goettsh, 2000; Randall and Thornton, 2001; Shulman, 2004; Gatbonton, 2008). This knowledge base encompasses different knowledge categories, such as content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners, among other types of knowledge (Shulman, 2004). Additionally, teaching practices seem to be

shaped by teachers' beliefs. Beliefs are considered evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable (Pajares, 1992). In research, it is argued, that teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs about subject matter have been separated for the purpose of clarity (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989, cited in Borg, 2003). Nevertheless, as Borg (2003) explains, this division does not generally exist since teachers' knowledge and beliefs are interlinked. Language teaching practices tend to be enlightened by beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of the learning process and the nature of the teaching act (Nunan, 2004). This is to say, that teachers' practices seem to be informed by their beliefs about what it means to know a language, about how learners become speakers and about how best to teach learners to become speakers of the foreign language. The practices, I have observed as a teacher educator, appear to reflect different beliefs that involve different theories of foreign language learning and teaching, which entail distinct epistemological positions. Some of them seem to be more in accordance than others with more current findings of research on language development. For example, some practices would illustrate awareness of the communicative nature of language (Widdowson, 1978), and language learning through communication engagement (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Nevertheless, other teaching practices still seem to evidence a view of language based on structural linguistics and language learning based on Behaviourism that regards foreign language learning as a process of mechanical habit formation (Richards and Rodgers, 2006).

Consequently, this case study aims to understand how teachers' practices are informed by their knowledge and beliefs as well as to identify the implications that this understanding would have for language teacher education. In teacher education, raising student-teachers' and teachers' awareness on the relevance of pedagogical beliefs, rather than working solely on their knowledge, would support their professional development and lead them to improve their teaching practice. A more holistic approach to the education of teachers in which the roles of their beliefs and teaching practices in the development of knowledge were recognised would foster teacher education.

Furthermore, studies in language teachers' cognition have made evident the relevance of cognition to teaching practices (e.g. Golombek, 1998; Breen et al., 2001; Dunkin, 2002; Hativa, 2002; Borg, 2003; Andrews, 2003; Richards, 2008 and Andon, 2009). Nevertheless, based on my participation in two published reviews on the research developed on foreign language teaching and learning in Mexico coordinated by Ramirez (2010 and 2012), I could say that how the language teachers' cognition informs their teaching practices has seldom been researched in Mexico. Moreover, there is little research in Mexico centred on teachers of foreign languages in comparison to the amount of research focused on other educational aspects. For example, the first review on foreign language teaching research from 2000 to 2005 also coordinated by Ramirez (2007) illustrated that few of the developed studies were focused on the teachers, while a considerable amount of them were focused on students. The following two reviews from 2000-2007 and 2000-2012 (Ramirez, 2010 and 2012), involving other Mexican states, also confirmed that the most researched subjects were the students and only few studies were centred on the teacher. In addition, based on my participation in these studies, I would argue that research on language teaching and language learning is still an incipient activity of heterogeneous quality in Mexico because, unlike the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) that initiated this type of research in the 1970s (Encinas, et.al., 2007), it only started in the late 1980s in other Mexican state universities (Ramirez, et. al., 2010). Moreover, in other parts of the country, language teaching and learning research did not start until the late 1990s, as in the state where this study was undertaken. Therefore, the present thesis aims to add to the research conducted on teachers by developing a case study focused on Mexican teachers of English as a foreign language in higher education and to strengthen the research in this area in Mexico.

The next section discusses the context of the research, which is central to understand the case study (Patton, 2002). The section outlines the main characteristics of ELT in Mexico, and the English language teaching programme in which the participant teachers in the study work.

1.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) IN MEXICO

In Mexico, English is a foreign language, and not a second language, since it does not have an institutional or social role in the community (Ellis, 2002). This distinction affects how English is learnt since foreign language contexts are those in which students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classroom (Brown, 2001). In Mexico, language classes are essentially the place where English is learnt since language classes are, normally, the main period of time that students are exposed to the English language. For example, an important amount of American television programs and films are exhibited in Mexico, however, they are usually dubbed.

In Mexico, English is taught in most of the different school levels as explained below. Compulsory Mexican public education covers 13 years: From pre-school to preparatory school (SEGOB, 2013). Different modalities of higher education follow this compulsory education such as university and teacher preparation as showed in Table 1.1.

School level	Number of school years	Students' age
Pre-school	1 year	5-6 years old
Primary (elementary) school	6 years	6-12 years old
Secondary school	3 years	12-15 years old
Public preparatory school	3 years	15- 18 years old
University / Teacher preparation School (Normal) Secondary teacher preparation School (Normal Superior) / Technological Institutes / Technological Universities	4-5 years	18- 23 years old

Table 1.1: Mexican school levels

In Mexico, foreign languages have been part of the public school curriculum since 1854. English and French have been first optional and then compulsory subjects in secondary and preparatory curriculums (Arredondo, 2007). Nevertheless, because of the North American

Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that Canada, United States and Mexico signed in 1989, the teaching and learning of English were encouraged and supported by the Mexican government because it was thought to be a tool for conducting global businesses (TLCAN, 2013). Nowadays, English is not only considered an important tool to access the high amount of world information that is offered, but also as a tool for global communication as the participant teachers in the study stated. At present, the curriculums of the public secondary and preparatory schools assign three hours a week to the teaching of English (SEP, 2009). Additionally, the Mexican government implemented a national program for teaching English in public primary schools (PENIEB) three hours a week in 2009, although some Mexican states had been offering English in elementary schools years before the decree, as in the case of the state where this research was developed. Most of the teachers that teach English in the public primary schools of this state have studied the BA in ELT program offered by the university where this case study research was undertaken.

In Mexico, English is usually taught by Mexican teachers with different teacher education. A study by Tatto and Velez (1997) found that the teaching of English in public secondary schools was usually conducted by teachers that studied the teaching of English in secondary teacher preparation schools (Normal Superior). The curriculum of Normal Superior for preparing EFL teachers is principally composed of subjects on general pedagogical aspects for language teaching that are most of the times taught in Spanish. The teachers in charge of these subjects could be considered experts in pedagogy; however, they do not possess a high proficiency in English. It is especially difficult for teachers who have not studied in Normal Superior to work in this school level because of teacher union policies. The situation of the teachers that work for public preparatory schools is different since, according to the Council of Evaluation of Preparatory schools (COPEEMS), they are professionals with different academic backgrounds, who are commonly proficient English speakers. Most of them studied English in private institutions or lived in the USA. Nevertheless, they tend to lack of pedagogical training for the teaching of English since a specific school for preparatory school teacher preparation does not exist in Mexico (COPEEMS, 2013).

Regarding university level, before the mid-80s, the language centres of higher education institutions and schools such as the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute and the Mexican-North American Cultural Relations Institute (IMNRC) were mainly in charge of the training of English language teachers; for example, the UNAM language centre offered the first course for language teachers in 1978 (Da Silva et.al., 2008). English language teacher training essentially consisted of the study of some language teaching methods and approaches, techniques for the teaching of the four skills and some practice with real students. There were only three Bachelor's degrees in English Language Teaching program (BA in ELT) in Mexico at that time. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, a process of professionalization of in-service university English language teachers was encouraged by the British Council in Mexico, by Huw Williams, English Language Officer at that time, since most of the teachers did not hold credentials on EFL teaching. In 1990, a first agreement between the University of London and state universities of the centre of Mexico was signed. It offered Mexican teachers of English who were working at the state universities the opportunity of doing diplomas and master studies of the University of London, in Mexico. Later on, similar agreements with six other British universities were established as an attempt to cover the professionalization of language teachers of most of the state universities in Mexico. Additionally, national programs that supported the academic development of university teachers, such as PROMEP¹ that was created in 1996, also provided teachers with the possibility of doing master and doctorate studies in foreign universities. All of this contributed to increase the number of BA in ELT programs that took place in the last two decades and that were designed, in general, by teachers that studied in British universities. The BA in ELT programs increased from three in 1984 to more than twenty BA programs and ten MA programs in 2012 (ANUIES, 2012). In the university where the research is developed, the BA in ELT program was offered for the first time in the early 90s. A small group of Mexican university teachers, in which I was part, supported by British specialists, designed its curriculum.

¹ Spanish acronym of a program for teachers' qualification improvement

1.2.1 The Case Study University English Language

In Mexico, four different types of institutions provide higher education: universities, technological institutes, teacher preparation schools and technological universities (ANUIES, 2013). The present study is developed in a public state university. State universities are autonomous institutions that appoint their own authorities and are free to administer their patrimony and establish their own budgets. Nevertheless, the federal and state governments provide these state universities with financial support that is their main economical resource. It is mainly assigned according to the number of students and programs that universities have (SEP 1999). The population of the university where the case study is undertaken is about 15 000 students; it offers over 50 BA programs and about 30 postgraduate programs. Taking into account its population and number of programs, it could be considered a medium-sized university in Mexico. In this university, English started being taught a few years after its foundation. Nowadays, the university offers two programs for the study of foreign languages: The Extension Language program for the public and the University Foreign Language program for university students.

It was within the University Foreign Language program for university students that the present research was conducted. The University Foreign Language program started in 2000, and was modified in 2006 and again in 2012. It was created to support students to fulfil a university graduation requirement to obtain a BA degree. At present, the university requirement consists of having BA students take four English courses. The objectives of the courses for the teaching of English as a foreign language are focused on the development of oral and written communication through the practice of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The study of grammar and vocabulary is also included. At present, the programs for these courses are based on the New American Inside Out textbooks 1 and 2 from MacMillan. The courses are 80 hours per semester, an hour from Monday to Friday or five hours on Saturdays. The English courses are given by more than 100 teachers to an average of 2500 undergraduate students from a wide variety of areas of knowledge. Most of the teachers who teach English in the university studied the Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching program (BA in ELT) offered by the university, described above, as

was the case with the four participant teachers in the present research. At present, the teachers who have studied this BA in ELT program work in public primary schools, public universities, and in private institutions from the primary school level to the university level, as well as in international companies.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS AND TEACHING PRACTICES

The present research has been conducted from an interpretivist stance in which, from an ontological perspective, I consider that social reality depends on people constructing it, and we construct it in different ways. In addition, epistemologically, I consider that knowledge is socially constructed since my belief is that individuals work on constructing personal meaning since they are born (Williams and Burden, 1997) by engaging in social interaction. This research is focused on the relationships between language teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices. It analyses how two elements of teacher cognition, knowledge and beliefs, inform teaching practices. The relationship between teacher cognition and teaching practices has been described in research employing many terms such as maxims, principles, personal practical knowledge and personal convictions. For this research, teacher cognition refers to “unobservable cognitive dimensions of teaching – what teachers know, believe and think” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Defining knowledge is a complex task that embraces ontological and epistemological positions. In the present research, according to my epistemological stance, knowledge is considered to be constructed through a process of understanding (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) rather than a product of the transmission of information. Learners actively construct new understanding, based on their previous knowledge and through social interaction (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). I would argue that teacher knowledge is constructed through the understanding of the different aspects that language teaching involves such as what being proficient in a language means; how language learning takes place; the importance of the characteristics of the learners and of the characteristics of the context.

The teaching of English as a foreign language, as the teaching of any subject, requires a teacher knowledge base (Turner-Bisset, 2001). In this thesis this language teacher knowledge base is analysed drawing largely on Schulman's categories of knowledge (2004) in order to increase understanding of the knowledge of language teachers in Mexico. I also look at the knowledge of self, category proposed by Turner-Bisset (2001) that expands Shulman's knowledge categories because I consider knowledge of self to be essential for teacher development. In the present research the knowledge of the self category will not only cover teachers' knowledge of their personal values, dispositions, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, and their educational philosophy, but also teachers' knowledge of their beliefs about the teaching subject and about the teaching and learning processes due to the central role they appear to have in language teaching practices. Nevertheless, I realise that the different categories of knowledge, in the teaching practice, seem to be interconnected and to provide support to each other (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000).

I have found that defining beliefs has also been an intricate mission. They have been defined as "statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts and knowledge that are expressed as evaluation of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable" (Basturkmen et al., 2004, p 224). Beliefs have also been regarded as "an attitude consistently applied to an activity" (Eisenhart et al., 1988 in Farrel and Lim, 2005). In this research, beliefs are considered evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable. They can be stated or non-stated evaluations because beliefs in the main must be inferred from, what teachers say and do (Pajares, 1992). Moreover, although teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs have been separated in an attempt to explain them more clearly, teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs about subject matter are generally interlinked (Borg, 2003). Teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs seem to be part of a continuum where they overlap and are difficult to differentiate (Woods, 1996). Additionally, both teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs appear to inform their teaching practices. Consequently, the conviction that teachers' knowledge and beliefs inform their teaching practices led this research to be focused on the relationships between them.

Finally, language teaching is regarded as the activities which are intended to develop language learning; activities that do not only cover teaching actions within the classroom, but also supporting activities such as lesson planning and material design (Stern, 1983). Therefore, in this study, teaching practices are considered to be those actions the teachers perform in order to promote students' language learning.

1.4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

In Chapter One, I have provided a brief rationale for the development of the case study and explained the context in which it was constructed. In addition, the conceptualisation of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices that guided this research, have also been explained. In Chapter Two, with the purpose of supporting the construction of this case study, English language teaching is explored at three levels of conceptualisation and organisation: approach, design and procedure. Audiolingualism and Communicative Language teaching, probably the most influential methods and approaches in the teaching of foreign languages in Mexico, are also analysed. Additionally, literature on the knowledge, beliefs and practices of the teacher of English as a foreign language are reviewed and discussed.

Chapter Three presents and examines interpretative case study methodology and its appropriateness for researching English language teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices. It also discusses the relevance of reflexivity and ethical awareness in the development of the present research. The limitations of the study are also explained. Additionally, research methods, selection of participants and data analysis are explained.

Chapter Four presents the cases of the four participant teachers in the study. Each case begins by offering information on the teacher relevant to the study. It goes on to discuss

general characteristics of the teacher's classes. The teacher's key practices are then analysed in relation to research developed on the roles of teacher's knowledge and beliefs in teaching practices found in the literature.

In Chapter Five, the research questions are answered through a discussion of the participant teachers' base knowledge and beliefs and their relevance to their teaching practices. The chapter also examines implications of the research findings for BA in ELT education in Mexico.

Chapter Six presents conclusions about the important role of teachers' beliefs over their knowledge in their teaching practices and about the interconnection between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices. It offers a gear model of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices relationship for the understanding of this interconnection as a contribution of the case study. It also identifies issues, such as some inconsistency between some teachers' practices and their manifested beliefs that need further research. Finally the chapter closes by sharing personal and professional lessons developed through this research. I have realised how being a teacher educator strengthened the construction of this case study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of the literature that has informed the development of the theoretical approach adopted in the research. It is organised in four sections. Section 2.1 first explains how English language teaching methods are conceptualised and organised. It then, discusses the Audiolingual method and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT). It explains the theories of language learning, which entail distinct epistemological positions that support them and their main characteristics. Section 2.2 analyses how teachers' beliefs evolve and examines their relevance to foreign language teaching. Section 2.3 discusses the teacher knowledge base in relation to the teaching of English as a foreign language. Then, it reviews how knowledge has been classified according to its development and appearance in the literature. Section 2.4 examines the BA in ELT program that the case study teachers studied taking into consideration categories of knowledge identified by Shulman, (2004). Finally, section 2.5 discusses the relationships between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices.

2.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1.1 Approaches and Methods in ELT

For a better comprehension of the methods used to teach languages, they have been studied at three levels of conceptualisation and organisation: Approach, design and procedure as presented in the following table.

Approach	METHOD	
	Design	Procedure
a. A theory of the nature of language	a. The general and specific objectives of the method	a. Classroom techniques, practices and behaviours observed when the method is used
b. A theory of the nature of language learning	b. A syllabus model	
	c. Types of learning and teaching	
	d. Learner roles	
	e. Teacher roles	
	f. The role of instructional materials	

Table 2.1: Components of Method (source: Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.33)

Approach entails theories of language and language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). It could be said that epistemological and ontological positions about language and language learning are expressed at the level of approach. Language teaching implies, implicitly or explicitly, concepts of the nature of language and of the nature of language learning (Stern, 2003). Therefore, it could be argued that teachers' beliefs about the nature of language and the nature of language learning may influence their approach to their teaching practice. The theory of language identifies at least three conceptions of language: structural, functional and interactional conceptions. From a structural conception, language is "a coherent and unified system or structure in which the different parts have their place, and their relationships are adequately accounted for" (Stern, 2003, p. 134). Bloomfield, a leading figure of the Structuralism school, restricted linguistics to the study of the formal characteristics of language without considering the social context (Stern, 2003). In Structuralism, language is a system that needs to be mastered in order to learn the language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In the functional conception, language is the means of conveying functional meaning. It underlines the semantic and communicative aspects of the language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Hymes (1979) argues that communicative competence is not only the ability to use language grammatically correctly, but also to use it appropriately to the context. From an interactional perspective, language is the means of interaction between people (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Gumperz (1997, p. 40) regards

communicative competence as “the knowledge of linguistic and related communicative convention that speakers must have to initiate and sustain conversational involvement”. This is to say, that the interactional perspective focuses on the use of language in interaction rather than on the language (Stern, 2003).

The theory of language learning is about learning processes and situations that encourage the learning of a language. Language learning theory aims to identify the psychological and cognitive process that language learning involves and the conditions that these processes require (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Regarding the components of method, approach leads to a method through a design or syllabus. Syllabus is a more appropriate term to refer to design (Brown, 2001) since it is in the syllabus where each method specifies its objectives, types of learning and teaching activities, learner roles, teacher roles and the role of materials. Methods, a set of classroom specifications, to achieve linguistic goals (Brown, 2001), are learned through teacher training or education programs (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) such as the BA in ELT studied by the case study teachers. Procedure is the last level of organisation. It integrates the classroom techniques, practices and behaviours observed when the method is used (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). That is to say, the procedure level represents the actual teaching practice. The teaching practice of the case study teachers is the focused of this research. The study aims to increase our understanding of how the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge, which would belong in the levels of Approach and Design (Syllabus), inform their teaching practices.

2.1.2 The Audiolingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching

There have been different approaches and methods for the teaching of second and foreign languages through the history of language teaching. Approaches and methods have been transformed from awareness of findings in areas such as linguistics, psycholinguistics and language acquisition, and as a response to the changes in the type of language proficiency learners require (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001), as well as by research undertaken in other academic areas, such as Shulman’s (2004) study on teacher knowledge. Based on the

national exit exam for BA in ELT students (EGAL-EIN), it can be said that the study of ELT approaches and methods is commonly a central area in teacher preparation programs in Mexico. My professional experience suggests that the Audiolingualism from the 1950s (Stern, 1991) and the Communicative Language teaching (CLT) that started in the 1970s (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) are dominant methods and approaches in the teaching of foreign languages in Mexico. For example, the programs and in-service workshops of some schools encourage the implementation of the Communicative Approach, whereas, others ask for teaching practices representative of the Audiolingual method. The Audiolingual method is based on Behaviourism (Stern, 2003; Harmer, 2001). For Skinner, a leading figure of Behaviourism, “verbal behaviour was behaviour” (Skinner, 1974, p. 88). He regarded behaviour and learning as result of a conditioning process through stimulus and response reinforcement (Skinner, 1978). In the Audiolingual method, language is behaviour to be mastered, and language learning, in accordance with behaviourist theory, is the result of habit formation (Stern, 2003; Harmer, 2001). Consequently, language learning in the Audiolingual method, takes place through the learning of structures, sounds and words (Brown, 2001) by a stimulus-response-reinforcement process (Stern, 2003). Moreover, for Behaviourism, teaching is developing new repertoires of behaviour by the provision of stimulus and the reinforcement of the appropriate response, regarding learners as passive receptors of information (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004).

The origin of the Communicative Language Teaching approach was the movement against the behaviourist conception of language development initiated by linguists such as Chomsky in 1957. For Chomsky, it is impossible that language be the result of a conditioning process since children produce sentences that they have never learnt before, and they master complex and abstract linguistic rules that cannot be learnt from the samples of language to which they are exposed (Mitchell and Myles, 2004; De Bot et al., 2005). For the acquisition of language, “reinforcement, casual observation, and natural inquisitiveness are important factors” as well as “the capacity of the child to generalise, hypothesise, and process information that appear to be innate or develop through learning or through maturation of the nervous system” (Chomsky, 2004, p. 36). Theories of second language

acquisition also encouraged the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching. For example, the Communicative approach has been supported by constructivist theory. Constructivism is an epistemological position that regards learning as knowledge construction. Constructivism suggests that learner conceptions of knowledge are derived from a search of meaning, in which learners engage in a process of constructing individual interpretations of their experiences (Applefield et al., 2001, p. 5). There are two types of Constructivism: Cognitive and Social (Cohen, et al., 2004). The Cognitive Constructivism movement, lead by Piaget, focused on understanding children's thinking (Williams and Burden, 1997). In Cognitive Constructivism, learning is an individual construction of knowledge (Applefield et al., 2001). Social constructivism was dominated by Vygotsky whose principal concern was the research of language development because he considered language the essential tool for learning to happen, thinking to develop, and culture to be transmitted (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005). For Social constructivism, learning is a collaborative social interactive action (Applefield, et al., 2001).

Vygotsky gave birth to Sociocultural theory (SCT) that has enlightened language teaching more recently through its mediation and zone of proximal development (ZPD) concepts. Mediation is that “part played by other significant people in the learners’ lives, who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them” (Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 40). It could be argued that SCT places the teacher in the centre of the learning process since it regards the mediation of a more knowledgeable person essential in learning processes (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the gap between the learner’s current development level “as determined by independent problem solving” and the level of development that the learner could reach “through adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue that ZPD is the ability of people to take advantage of different types of interactions and mediations that permit them to perform activities that they would not be able to do without help. Therefore, the teachers’ mediation would be central for students learning. Mediation and the Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) underline the social nature of human learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

2.1.3 Characteristics of the Audiolingual Method and of Communicative Language Teaching

The Audiolingual method, as explained above, evolved from Linguistic structuralism and Behaviourist psychology, whereas Communicative Language teaching is supported by Linguistic functionalism and Cognitive and Social constructivism (Stern, 2003). They, therefore, have distinct characteristics that are summarised in the following table.

	Audio-lingual Method	The Communicative Language Teaching
Epistemology stance	Structuralism and Behaviourism	Functionalism / Interactionism and Constructivism
Language theory	Language is a behaviour to be mastered	Language is a means of communication
Language learning theory	Learning: Habit formation through stimulus –response-reinforcement	Learning through social interaction
Syllabuses	Based on grammatical structures	Mainly based on language functions
Objectives	Oral proficiency	Communicative competence
Activities	Focus on structure and form Structure-based dialogues Language items are not contextualised Drills and repetitions	Focus on meaning Communicative function-based dialogues Contextualisation is a premise Information gaps, role plays and games
Interaction patterns	Teacher-student, teacher-whole class	Pair work, group work
Teachers roles	Providers of good models Teacher-dominated method: Control, pace and monitor learning	Facilitator of learning Establishes situations to promote communication
Student roles	Imitators of teacher's model Reactive role by responding to stimuli	Active role by negotiating meaning
Error treatment	Errors must be prevented	Errors as part of language development

Types of materials	Graded language materials	Semi-authentic and authentic material

Table 2.2: Audio-lingual Method / Communicative Language Teaching

The Audiolingual method is focused on the development of the speaking skill, and it aims to reach oral proficiency in which accurate pronunciation and grammar are emphasised. The syllabus of the Audiolingual method is based on structures (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Teachers, therefore, focus on the teaching of structures (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). In this method, the teaching process is characterised by the presentation of new vocabulary and structural patterns through dialogues. These dialogues are learned by imitation and repetition. Since language is a behaviour to be mastered, drills and repetitions are activities frequently used (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). They are generally an uncontextualised practice of structures. Errors are prevented because they can interfere with the formation of correct habits in the foreign language (De Bot et al., 2005). Since language learning results from a stimulus-response-reinforcement process, classroom interaction is mostly between teacher and students and initiated by the teacher (Davis and Pearse, 2000), who provides the stimulus or reinforces the response. Eliciting, as an action to obtain a correct response, and rewarding students to reinforce proper behaviour would be examples of teaching practices within the Audio-lingual method. Therefore, the teachers' main roles are as providers of models and elicitors of responses. They control, pace and monitor learning while students imitate models and respond to stimulus, thus the classes are mainly centred on the teacher.

Communicative Language Teaching is based on a theory of language as a system of expression of meaning and by the communication principles: meaningful and authentic use of language promotes language learning (Brown, 2001). Language learning means learning specific communicative functions through using the language in interaction (Davis and Pearse, 2000; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Consequently, teaching is mainly based on having students practice language functions using appropriate structures (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Communicative Language Teaching aims to develop communicative competence,

this is to say, to be able to interact using language appropriate to the context. In Communicative Language Teaching approaches, activities generally have a communicative intention. For example, games, role-plays and information gap activities and the use of students' information are frequently employed. Therefore, pair-work and small group work are the most common interaction patterns in Communicative Language Teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Repetition practise and grammar structure practise are also conducted, but they are normally contextualised and meaningful (Davis and Pearse, 2000). In Communicative Language Teaching errors are not forbidden, but are considered evidence of language learning. Self-correction and peer-correction are also elicited (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Due to the type of activities encouraged by Communicative Language Teaching, the main teachers' roles are being a facilitator and setting activities that promote communication between students. This is to say that, in accordance with Sociocultural theory, being a mediator would be the essential role of the teacher (Applefield, et al., 2001); whereas, students' main role as negotiators of meaning (Davis and Pearse, 2000), would be as constructors of knowledge (Applefield et al., 2001). Communicative Language Teaching also encourages student centred classes (Davis and Pearse, 2000).

During my professional experience, I have noticed that many language teachers recognise the characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching as important for the teaching of foreign languages, for example, emphasis on communication and use of authentic tasks. Nevertheless, a kind of contradiction can be identified because, by observing their classes or through their descriptions of their teaching practices, it can be noticed that they exhibit different characteristics from those emphasised by Communicative Language Teaching. Moreover, in the actual teaching practice of language teachers, practices of the Audio-lingual method such as drills, repetition, rewarding students through extra points are observed. In spite of the origin of Communicative Language Teaching as a reaction against the Audio-lingual method, in daily language teaching practice, both of them are simultaneously implemented. It is possible that teachers' selection of a specific approach or method to their teaching practice might be influenced by factors other than their teacher knowledge base. As explained above, the level of approach integrates theories and beliefs,

and the method level covers knowledge of aspects such as types of objectives, teaching and learning activities and teachers and learners' roles. In summary, in order to understand teachers' choices of approach and method, it is important to know their pedagogical beliefs and knowledge, which would illustrate that teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices are interrelated.

2. 2 TEACHERS' BELIEFS

Teachers' beliefs about teaching and subject matter seem to have a central role in the actual implementation of their teaching practices (Dunkin, 2002; Hativa, 2002). Moreover, the selection and application of teaching techniques would depend on teachers' assumptions and beliefs about how students learn and on the kind of methodology that they believe best supports this learning process (Richards and Lockhart, 1996; Johnstone and Goettsch, 2000). As Nunan (2004, p. 6) stated, "everything teachers do in the classroom is underpinned by beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of the learning process and the nature of the teaching act". This is to say, that teachers' practices would be informed by their beliefs about what it means to know a language, about how learners become speakers and about how best to teach learners to become speakers of the foreign language. For example, if teachers believe that knowing a language means to know their linguistics systems, this will have implications for the manner in which they teach. If, on the other hand, they consider that knowing a language is being able to use it for communication, then they will take a very different approach to teaching it. Overall, it could be argued that teachers' beliefs are expressions of epistemological and ontological stances.

The beliefs teachers have about teaching content and process and their understanding of the context where they work, are part of their beliefs systems (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). Beliefs about teaching, which incorporate thoughts about what it takes to be a teacher and how students should behave, are developed during the school years, and already set before entering university (Pajares, 1992). Nevertheless, they can change because of different

reasons, such as teaching experience and knowledge development (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). For example, beliefs influence teaching practices and teaching practices can also lead to changes in beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2007). The teachers' beliefs systems are constructed slowly and are composed of different types of beliefs such as peripheral and core beliefs. Peripheral beliefs are theoretically embraced whereas core beliefs are grounded in experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

Teachers' beliefs have different sources (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). One of these sources is teachers' own experience as language learners when their beliefs about teaching mirror their experience as language learners (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). For example, in Mexican university language classes, the use of some traditional techniques, such as reading aloud, can be observed because teachers were used to doing that when they were learning English, and those techniques worked for them. Teachers' experience of what works best is also a source of teachers' beliefs. Teachers tend to trust in the strategies that work well for them and avoid those that have not been successful (Richards and Lockhart, 1996; Senior, 2006). Breen et al. (2001), in a study of eighteen ESL teachers in Australia, found that teachers' beliefs about language, educational process, language learning and teaching appear to be strongly influenced by experience. Moreover, Andon (2009), in a case study of four native speakers that teach English in private institutions in London, identified that the teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning had not evolved from education courses but from their learning and teaching experiences. Therefore, it could be argued, as Phipps and Borg (2009) state that teachers' beliefs are influenced by teachers' own experiences. Moreover, pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices influence each other in teachers' daily work (Breen et al., 2001). Additionally, when core beliefs are firmly grounded in experience, they would exert most influence on teaching practices. However, peripheral beliefs may remain unimplemented ideals if they are not established through personal positive experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Therefore, personal and professional experiences appear to be central for embracing beliefs.

Educationally based or research-based principles are also a source of teachers' beliefs. Johnson (1992, cited in Richards and Lockhart, 1996), by researching thirty ESL teachers, found that they teach according to their theoretical beliefs, and that different beliefs seem to be the source of different instruction practices. Teachers support their understanding with the knowledge they have obtained from other areas, such as psychology, sociolinguistics and education (Richards and Lockhart, 1996), understanding that can be the source of theoretical beliefs. For instance, teachers may be interested in incorporating collaborative work into their practice because they have become familiar with Sociocultural theory, which is an influential theory as has been discussed above. Moreover, principles derived from approaches or methods are also found to be the origin of teachers' beliefs. Teachers may be convinced that a specific approach or teaching method is the most effective (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). For instance, English Language authorities in the Public Primary School Program in Mexico believe that the Communicative approach is the most appropriate way of teaching a language. Therefore, they encourage the implementation of this approach in primary schools English classes (IEA, 2008). It could be said that when teachers' beliefs have an educational or research principle base or their source is an approach or method, their actual origin is the teachers' knowledge. This is to say, that beliefs are also related to knowledge.

Furthermore, some teachers also favour the teaching patterns, arrangement or activities that match their dispositions and characteristics such as being good at material design, being energetic or relaxed (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). In addition, Bailey et al. (1996), through a study based on autobiographical writing, found that in making language learning experiences positive, teachers' characteristics such as being caring, committed, respectful and having clear expectations from students were more important than the methodology they followed - regarding methodology as the teaching approaches, activities, materials and procedures teachers used (Richards, 2002).

According to Turner-Bisset (2001), teachers' beliefs appear to influence their behaviour in the classroom more than any imposed methodology or course book they have to follow. Nevertheless, some studies illustrate that teachers hold contradictory beliefs and that some inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices exists (Senior, 2006). For example, Senior (2006) explains that research shows that although teachers state to follow a communicative approach, in practice, they follow more structural approaches. A possible reason behind this behaviour could be teachers' peripheral and core beliefs on English learning and the best ways of teaching it. For instance, Phipps and Borg (2009), researching teachers' beliefs and their practices in teaching grammar, found that the differences between teachers' professed beliefs about language learning and the practices observed had their origin in the different peripheral and core beliefs they hold. Teachers' practices appeared to reflect teachers' core beliefs illustrating, in this manner that core beliefs, experientially established, and peripheral beliefs, theoretically embraced, were not held with the same level of conviction (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

In conclusion, it seems that teachers hold a mixture of beliefs that have different origins, and that teachers' experiences are a significant aspect in their construction. Understanding of teachers' beliefs appears to be essential because the beliefs teachers embrace affect their judgment, shaping their classroom behaviour (Pajares, 1992). Nevertheless, awareness of the fact that teachers beliefs must be generally inferred from what teachers say and do, is necessary in research since they cannot be directly observed or measured (Pajares, 1992; Andon, 2009).

2.3 TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

There is a knowledge base for teaching that is significant for teachers irrespective of the subject they teach (Randall and Thornton, 2001). Shulman's categorisation of this knowledge has provided a useful framework for the comprehension of teaching since it explains the different forms of knowledge teaching involves (Johnson and Goettsch, 2000;

Turner-Bisset, 2001; Tsui, 2003; Gatbonton, 2008). According to Shulman (2004) the teacher knowledge base is composed of seven categories: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends. Freeman (2002) argues, however, that because of the special relationship between content and medium in language teaching, Shulman's knowledge categories may not be wholly applicable to the language-teaching field. Nevertheless, language teacher research has been influenced by conceptualizations of teaching developed in other academic fields, such as Shulman's work on teacher knowledge. A key issue is then whether language teachers, because of their subject matter, are similar or different from teachers of other subjects (Borg, 2003; Tsui, 2003). I would argue that language teaching exhibits more similarities than differences to the teaching of other subjects, and that understandings of teacher practice from researching other subject areas can be applied to the study of the teaching of English as a foreign language (Borg, 2003).

2.3.1 Content (Subject) knowledge

Content knowledge refers to the amount and organization of knowledge on the subject in the mind of the teacher (Shulman, 2004). It includes the knowledge of content of a subject, such as facts and concepts, and knowledge of their relationships (Tsui, 2003). The dynamic nature of the language and the complexity of the content of language teaching make subject knowledge an aspect in which language teachers are thought to be different from teachers of other subjects (Borg, 2006). In ELT, this type of knowledge does not only integrate knowledge about English, but also the teacher's English proficiency. Language teachers do not only need to know about the different linguistic aspects of the language, such as lexis and syntax, but also they need to be proficient speakers of the foreign language (Randall and Thornton, 2001). Therefore, in opposition to Johnston and Goettsch (2000) who consider declarative knowledge (teachers' knowledge about the language) more important and representative of content knowledge than procedural knowledge (the teachers' ability

to speak the language), it can be argued that both of them should be considered essential aspects of content knowledge in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Teachers with deeper subject knowledge are able to guide students to make more conceptual connections since they can construct meaningful dialogues with students. They can also identify students' misconceptions, as well as deal with students' learning problems and find solutions to them (Tsui, 2003). Therefore, content (subject) knowledge is central for language teaching. Tsui (2003) also explained that less-knowledgeable teachers used different avoidance strategies, such as, in English classes, teachers avoided teaching grammar. Based on my experience as teacher educator, I could say that in Mexico the situation appears to be different because less-knowledgeable teachers tend to base their practice on the teaching of grammar. Nevertheless, they limit their presentations to a collection of grammar rules, and they tend to emphasise routinized and mechanical activities such as drills. On the other side, teachers with higher levels of language proficiency tend to encourage a more communicative practice of language as Andrews (2003) argued. The degree of the procedural and declarative components of content knowledge that language teachers need for their teaching practice could be the reason behind this situation. I take this to mean that a teacher with strong procedural knowledge (ability to speak the language) would find it easier to follow a communicative approach, whereas, a teacher with strong declarative knowledge (knowledge about the language) would find it easier to explain grammatical issues, especially when it can be done in Spanish. In Mexico, most of the teachers that teach English are Mexican, non-native speakers of English. These teachers, therefore, have needed to learn the formal linguistic aspects of English as well as become English speakers to construct their content knowledge. For many of them, it has been less problematic and faster to learn the grammar of the language than become proficient English speakers. This is to say, being able to use the language, integrating its four skills, reading writing, listening and speaking, is for many teachers much more demanding than being able to describe its grammar system. Therefore, developing subject knowledge for foreign language teaching is the result of a long process.

2.3.2 Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a particularly relevant category for teaching because it integrates content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the different interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction (Shulman, 2004, p. 228). Pedagogical content knowledge involves knowledge of ways of representing and formulating the academic content for teaching to learners. It also includes knowledge of conceptions, misconceptions and problems that learners have when learning, and knowledge of the appropriate teaching strategies to respond to learners' specific needs (Shulman, 2004).

In foreign language teaching, pedagogical content knowledge is knowledge about ELT methodology. It includes knowledge about teaching approaches, methods and techniques as well as knowledge about language learning theories (Randall and Thornton, 2001). Pedagogical content knowledge is essential because teachers need to know about: the students' language learning problems; what works to solve those problems; how to intervene and why to implement a specific intervention (Pachler et al., 2007). That is to say, it is not enough to know how to teach a good class, but it is also necessary to understand the reasons behind the actions required. Thus, theoretical knowledge that supports teachers' actions is central.

Gatbonton (2008), by observing novice and experienced teachers' English classes for adult emigrants in Canada, found that novice teachers acquired the larger categories of pedagogical content knowledge that can underlie active teaching behaviours after only a few years of training and minimal teaching experience. They also developed the knowledge about teaching activities such as observing and taking note of what students do during the learning process. However, novice teachers need more time and experience to be able to apply this knowledge (Gatbonton, 2008). Moreover, Turner-Bisset (2001) identified that a significant difference between less and more experienced teachers was the usage of the fullest form of pedagogical content knowledge. Therefore, more experienced teachers

appear not only to possess more and diverse types of pedagogical knowledge categories, but also to know how to apply them to their teaching practice.

2.3.3 General pedagogical knowledge

General pedagogical knowledge refers to the principles, strategies and organization of classroom management (Shulman, 2004). The management of learning and the management of resources are part of general pedagogical knowledge. They include aspects such as handling classroom discipline, organization of learning, maximizing resources and time and encouraging participation. General pedagogical knowledge also covers the diverse strategies to get learners involved and motivated (Turner-Bisset, 2001). In addition, for the language teacher, the use of English in the classroom is incorporated (Tsui, 2003).

In ELT, the approach or method applied mainly determines these issues since they specify the teacher's and students' roles, types of interactions, types of materials among other aspects (Randall and Thornton, 2001). For instance, the Communicative approach emphasises pair and small group work to offer students opportunities for interaction. It encourages the use of authentic material as examples of real language. On the other side, the Audio-lingual method is centred on the teacher. The classroom interaction is mainly between the teacher and students. Materials and students' participation are controlled to avoid errors from students (Brown, 1994; Celce-Murcia, 2001, and Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, it could be argue that the knowledge of the teachers of different ELT approaches and methods would contribute not only to their pedagogical content knowledge but also to their general pedagogical knowledge.

2.3.4 Curriculum knowledge

Curriculum knowledge refers to the knowledge of the programmes, materials and resources designed for the teaching of specific subjects (Shulman, 2004). In ELT in Mexico, it is

common for this aspect to be influenced and covered by publishers. In general, institutions design language programs based on a specific textbook or have teachers follow a textbook as a program. For example, the participant teachers in this study follow a program based on the New American Inside Out textbook from MacMillan. This textbook is focused on the practice of grammar structures and some language functions. It generally presents grammar in context. It has exercises for the controlled practice of language structures and activities for a more communicative practice of the language. It also encourages the practice of the four language skills. Borg (2006) identified the range of materials, methods and activities available to language teachers as a specific characteristic of the foreign language teacher. This characteristic could be a disadvantage if institutions or teachers use these aids without previous analysis, following economic interests in the case of published material, or fashion, regarding method implementation.

2.3.5 Knowledge of learners and their characteristics

Turner-Bisset (2001) clarified Shulmans's category Knowledge of learners and their characteristics by dividing it into empirical knowledge of learners and cognitive knowledge of learners. Empirical knowledge of learners is knowledge of what students are like, that is to say, knowledge of students' behaviours, interests, preoccupations, and knowledge of how contextual aspects can influence their learning. This type of knowledge informs teaching decisions and affects student-teacher relationships. Borg (2006) suggests that language teachers tend to develop especially close and positive relationships with learners. This could be because language teachers have more opportunities to get to know their students since, in general in language classes students are asked to practice the language by exchanging information about themselves. Borg (2006) considers this a distinctive characteristic of the foreign language teacher.

Cognitive knowledge integrates two aspects: knowledge of theories of learner development and specific knowledge of specific groups of learners. It is expected that teachers know different theories of development and be aware of their implications for the teaching and learning process. Knowledge of learners is important not only to be able to adapt the

teaching process, activities and materials, to respond to their diverse needs (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001), but also to create high expectations, positive attitudes towards the subject and a positive learning atmosphere (Turner-Bisset, 2001).

There has been a shift in the focus of the language class, from a focus on the language to a focus on the learner (De Bot et al., 2005). Therefore, it is essential for teachers be aware of learners' differences when making decisions about methodology in ELT contexts (Skehan, 1998; Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2001; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Harmer, 2001) since learners' differences can be on different levels including learning strategies, learning preferences, language proficiency and age. For instance, the classes of the participant teachers in this study are composed of young university adults from 18 to 28 years old as an average. Therefore, students would present some specific language learning characteristics because of their age.

2.3.6 Knowledge of educational contexts

Knowledge of the different educational contexts and their different effects on learning, a knowledge category also established by Shulman (2004), enables teachers to promote the best possible learning according to the different circumstances (Turner-Bisset, 2001). For example, the case study teachers work in different educational contexts such as in primary schools and in a state university. Therefore, it is important for them to be able to address the different contextual learning needs of the students within these two educational contexts.

In addition, in relation to language teaching, it is necessary to be aware of the difference between second and foreign language contexts because they involve different learning opportunities. In second language learning contexts, the classroom target language is readily available out there (Brown, 1994). However, in foreign language contexts as in Mexico, language classes commonly are the only period of time when students are exposed

to English, a situation that needs to be compensated not only within the classroom, but also with extra learning opportunities (Brown, 1994).

2.3.7 Knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds

The teacher knowledge base categorised by Shulman (2004) also encompasses knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds. Therefore, the study of sociology, philosophy, and history of education should be an important element in teacher education programmes in higher education. However, this knowledge can be reduced to a historical review of methods in ELT in many teacher education programmes (Randall and Thornton, 2001). For teachers, educational ends should be explicit in their thinking and planning (Turner-Bisset, 2001). Teachers need to be aware not only of the short and long-term goals of their courses, but also of the purposes of the curriculum they should follow since the curriculum is “the overall rationale for the educational programme of an institution” as Finney underlines (2002, p. 70). Moreover, knowledge of the educational ends of the university, of the curriculum and of their own goals as well as awareness of the similarities and tensions among them would benefit the teachers of English as a foreign language in their daily teaching practice (Turner-Bisset, 2001).

2.3.8 Knowledge of self and knowledge/models of teaching

Turner-Bisset (2001) expands Shulman’s classification by adding two more categories: Knowledge of self and Knowledge/models of teaching. Knowledge of self refers to “teachers’ awareness of their own values, dispositions, strengths and weaknesses, and their educational philosophy, goals for students, and purpose for teaching” (Hativa, 2002, p. 347). This knowledge is essential for teaching improvement since the self plays an important role in evaluation and reflection. Moreover, self-awareness and self-observation are the basis for professional development (Bailey et al., 2001; Turner-Bisset, 2001). In

addition, in ELT, teachers' self-awareness of being a native or non-native speaker is important because it provides specific advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered in their teaching. For instance, teachers who are native speakers of English tend to use real language and supply more cultural information, whereas teachers that are non-native English speakers tend to use 'bookish' language and supply less cultural information (Medgyes, 1994). Nevertheless, non-native English speaker teachers are able to offer students a learner model to imitate, and to understand and prevent students' English learning problems (Medgyes, 1994). Knowledge/models of teaching are described as beliefs about teaching and learning that are mainly formed from teachers own experiences. Moreover, Turner-Bisset (2001) adds beliefs about the nature of the subject to Shulman's Content Knowledge category highlighting the relevance of teachers' beliefs about what English is and what speaking English means to foreign language teaching practices.

In relation to ELT, I would share the argument that the pedagogical content knowledge that underpins expert teaching involves all the other knowledge bases discussed above which contribute to the richest form of pedagogical content knowledge (Turner-Bisset, 2001). A wide knowledge foundation is needed for the teaching of languages (Hativa, 2002). I would also consider that "pedagogical content knowledge is subject specific" (Turner-Bisset, 2001, p. 142).

Additionally, Wallace (1991), Eraut (2000, 2004) and Richards (2008) have classified teacher knowledge reflecting how it is developed and exhibited. It could be argued that the different types of knowledge, summarised in the following table, share some characteristics.

Author	Knowing about	Knowing how
Anderson, 1982	Declarative	Procedural
Wallace, 1991	Received	Experiential
Eraut, 2000	Explicit	Tacit
Richards, 2008	Explicit	Implicit

Table 2.3: Classification of knowledge according to its type of construction and expression.

Wallace (1991) divided teacher knowledge into received knowledge and experiential knowledge. Received knowledge includes research-based theories, techniques and skills while experiential knowledge refers to knowledge developed by the practice of the profession. From a different perspective, Richards (2008) classified teacher knowledge as *Knowledge about* and *Knowledge how*. *Knowledge about* is based on explicit knowledge whereas *Knowledge how* is supported by implicit knowledge. Implicit knowledge covers personal beliefs and theories that motivate teachers' practical actions (Richards, 2008). Eraut (2000, 2004) classified teacher knowledge into tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge could be compared to implicit knowledge and to experiential knowledge since tacit knowledge is also developed from personally experienced events within relevant contexts, and it must be inferred from teachers' behaviour through observations. Tacit knowledge also encompasses personal beliefs, perspectives and theories. Explicit knowledge can be articulated whereas tacit knowledge is exhibited (Kakabadase et al., 2001). Nevertheless, similar to Shulman's categories of knowledge, tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge are divided to be understood better, however, they are components of teachers' knowledge difficult to differentiate in teaching practice (Eraut, 2000). Additionally, tacit knowledge could be comparable to procedural knowledge, knowing how, and explicit knowledge to declarative knowledge, knowing about. Procedural knowledge is knowledge displayed in action without awareness of its existence while declarative knowledge is about issues people are aware they know and can describe (Kakabadase et al., 2001).

The above classifications of knowledge have been done considering mainly the way knowledge is developed and manifested. The types of knowledge below the *Knowing how* title are developed from personal learning experiences within relevant contexts whereas the ones below the *Knowing about* are developed in formal learning contexts from information mainly derived from research. Additionally, the knowledge types below the *Knowing how* title are generally inferred from teaching practices while the knowledge types below the *Knowing about* are commonly stated and discussed. Moreover, implicit knowledge (Richards, 2008) and tacit knowledge (Eraut, 2000) covers personal beliefs and theories.

In summary, Shulman's categorisation of teacher knowledge provides a useful framework for the comprehension of teaching (Tsui, 2003). It is also relevant to notice that the different types of knowledge are components difficult to differentiate since in teaching practice a given type of knowledge usually implies other types of knowledge (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000; Kakabadase, 2001; Tsui, 2003). In addition, teachers' explicit and tacit knowledge include Shulman's knowledge categories. For example, teachers tacitly and explicitly have knowledge of content, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends. It can also be stated that the teaching of English as a foreign language requires a wide knowledge base that should be considered in teacher development programs because teachers' knowledge and their teaching practices tend to inform each other offering new understanding of teaching (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000; Tsui, 2003).

2.4 BA in ELT Program 2003 and its relation to the categories of knowledge

I examined the BA in ELT program studied by the case study teachers with the aim of facilitating the understanding of the cases. This examination would be a background to the study as well as an application of the categories of knowledge discussed, I used Shulman's categories of knowledge (2004) to examine the BA in ELT program rather than conducting a curriculum analysis, to explore the possible types of knowledge that the case study

teachers' knowledge base could cover. Since a key interest of this research was to better understand what forms of knowledge teachers draw on, Shulman's classification of knowledge (2004) has provided a helpful support for the comprehension of teaching (Tsui 2003; Gatbonton, 2008) as stated above.

The BA in ELT aims to encourage teacher development rather than teacher training. Its purpose is that student-teachers develop the knowledge that would support their future teaching practice, as well as their development as English language teachers. Its curriculum has been modified three times with the purpose of responding to the changes of contextual needs. The 2003 program, which is the program followed by the case study teachers, lasts eight semesters and is made up of nine strands presented in the following table.

BA in ELT STRANDS	CATEGORY OF KNOWLEDGE
The Development of English skills strand	Procedural knowledge
The English Studies strand	Declarative knowledge
The Applied Linguistics strand	Pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners' characteristics
The ELT Methods strand	Pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners' characteristics and curriculum knowledge
The Practicum strand	Integration of the different types of knowledge
The Education Studies strand	Knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners' characteristics and curriculum knowledge
The Study Skills strand	Content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of institutional contexts and knowledge of educational ends
The Spanish strand	Pedagogical content knowledge

Table 2.4: BA in ELT 2003 strands and categories of knowledge

In order for students to be able to start the first semester of the BA in ELT, they should demonstrate a 450 TOEFL score. If they do not possess this score, they are admitted in the propedeutic year of the BA in ELT. This year aims to help students develop their English proficiency. It is composed of five subjects: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Grammar which are studied 25 hours a week.

2.4.1 The Nine Strands of the BA in ELT 2003 program

The Development of English skills strand consists of seven subjects focussing on the learning of the English language. These subjects support the development of procedural knowledge, defined as the ability to speak the language (Anderson, 1982) because language teachers need to be proficient speakers of the foreign language. *The English Studies strand* covers six subjects focused on the study of English at distinct levels: Phonetics, Grammar, Semantics and Culture. These subjects facilitate the development of declarative knowledge – knowledge about the language (Anderson, 1982). Both strands, Development of English skills and English Studies contribute to the development of the language teachers' content knowledge that covers knowledge about English and the English teacher's proficiency.

The Applied Linguistics strand is made up of five subjects centred on the knowledge of the English language from different perspectives: Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics and Discourse Analysis. These subjects contribute to teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners' characteristics. *The ELT Methods strand* is composed of six subjects focused on the study of methods, techniques, materials as well as programs for English language teaching. This strand as in the case of the Applied Linguistics strand encourages the development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), knowledge of learners' characteristics and curriculum knowledge. The *Practicum strand* covers eight subjects that aim to support the student teachers in the integration of the different types of knowledge and their gradual application into their teaching practice. It could be said that teachers' peripheral and core beliefs would evolve

from these subjects since they are mainly based on teaching experiences. Subjects such as Classroom Observation, Team teaching and Teaching Practice are part of this strand.

The Education Studies strand consists of a wide range of subjects. For example, subjects such as Introduction to Education and Sociology of Education and Development of Professional Values would support the knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds. In addition, the subjects of Teaching Approaches and Methodology of Education contribute to pedagogical content knowledge. The subject, Psychology of Learning, encourages the knowledge of learners' characteristics, and the Curriculum Design subject aims to construct curriculum knowledge. *The Study Skills strand* covers four subjects. The subjects Skills for Creative Thinking and Skills for Critical reading support the development of pedagogical content knowledge. Strategies for Foreign Language Learning would support the development of content knowledge, and the ELT Management subject contributes to curriculum knowledge, knowledge of institutional contexts and knowledge of educational ends. *The Spanish strand* is composed of two subjects that attempt to raise awareness of the phonetic and grammatical characteristics of Spanish with the aim of facilitating the study of these aspects of the English language. It therefore has the potential to contribute to pedagogical content knowledge.

2.5 TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS AND TEACHING PRACTICES

In this section it is argued that, in research, teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs about subject matter have been separated for the purpose of clarity (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989, cited in Borg, 2003). As Borg (2003) explains, this division does not generally exist since teachers' knowledge, and beliefs are interlinked. It is also important to notice that, in teachers' beliefs studies, a diversity of terms has been used: principles of practice, personal knowledge / theories / epistemologies, beliefs, perspectives, assumptions, teachers' conceptions and practical knowledge (Pajares, 1992). The use of many different

terms in discussing what seem to be the same issues raises questions, such as if they refer to the same event from different perspectives or if they actually refer to different issues. In all the studies, identifying where knowledge ended and belief started has been problematic (Pajares, 1992). For example, Woods (1998, cited in Borg, 2003) proposed the notion of Beliefs, Attitudes and Knowledge for which he used the acronym of BAK. Woods (1998, cited in Borg, 2003) argued that beliefs, attitudes and knowledge were points of a single spectrum of meaning. He also suggested that beliefs, attitudes and knowledge appeared to motivate everything teachers did (Woods, 1996, cited in Johnston and Goettsch, 2000). Therefore, teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices would be interrelated as the following studies illustrate.

Golombek (1998) proposed the notion of Personal Practical Knowledge with the acronym PPK. He studied how the classroom performance of language teachers was outlined by their knowledge of self, of subject matter, of instruction and of context, all of them interacting personal practical knowledge categories. The study also illustrated how "language teachers' personal practical knowledge was personally relevant, situational, oriented towards practice, dialectical and dynamic as well as moralistic, emotional and consequential" (Golombek, 1998, p. 96). Teachers' practical knowledge does not only allow them to understand their classrooms, it also informs their practice. At the same time 'PPK', teachers' knowledge in action, is also enlightened by understandings of teaching and learning. In summary, teachers' classroom practice and their personal practical knowledge influence each other since they provide feedback to each other constantly (Golombek, 1998).

There have been problems in researching teaching because it has been conceptualised in terms of either knowledge, or skill, or processes without sufficient awareness of the fact that the professional knowledge base for teaching involves knowledge, processes, skills, beliefs, values and attitudes (Turner-Bisset, 2001). Moreover, teachers' conceptions appear to be strongly associated to their beliefs and knowledge (Evans, 1994, cited in Turner-

Bisset, 2001). It also seems that “neither beliefs nor practice had primacy, but that they are dialectically related” (Cobb et al., 1988, cited in Turner-Bisset, 2001, p. 28). For example, in a study conducted in a university in Israel by Hativa (2002), on poor teaching that examined damaging factors in teacher characteristics and aptitudes, pedagogical knowledge, and thinking and beliefs that produce poor instruction, as perceived by students. It was found that the main problems were in lesson organization, lesson clarity and in making the lesson interesting. The identified underlying causes behind these problems were lack of general pedagogical knowledge, and detrimental beliefs about teaching and students. One of the teachers in the study, in spite of his many years of experience, had a poor knowledge of teaching techniques. The young teacher knew about more teaching techniques, but he was unable to apply them. Both teachers also held beliefs that damaged their teaching behaviour, such as considering teaching as transmission and regarding content coverage as a main aim of teaching. All these aspects had a major effect on their classroom behaviour, making evident the interconnection of teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices.

Dunkin (2002), through researching novice and expert teachers in the University of Sydney, claims that teaching quality “is more a matter of what teachers do than what they believe” (p. 44). Nevertheless, knowing and doing are definitively connected to each other. What teachers know, understand, believe and think about teaching and learning allow them to make appropriate decisions at the different stages of the teaching-learning process. The size and quality of the repertoire of knowledge and thought that teachers have is central for their teaching quality (Dunkin, 2002). For example, this study found that more experienced teachers were more aware of how the different contexts may limit the influence they have on students learning, consequently, they knew more than novice teachers (Dunkin, 2002). This is to say that they probably have a wider knowledge of educational contexts. Hativa and Goodyear (2002) also found that more experienced teachers showed important differences. For instance, they had more complex thoughts about teaching that improved student learning; they had stronger beliefs on the important influence that they played on their students’ learning; they relied more on their teaching skills to promote students’

learning, and believed they knew how to engage in efficient self-evaluation. Therefore, it helps to illustrate how experience contributes to improved teaching practice.

Andrews (2003) conducted a study on English language teachers' cognition (their knowledge, beliefs and understandings) about grammar in secondary schools in Hong Kong. He found major relationships between their levels of language proficiency, explicit grammar knowledge, and beliefs about grammar pedagogy. It identified that the application of an inductive approach to grammar teaching was associated with higher levels of explicit grammar knowledge, while following a deductive approach was related to lower levels of explicit grammar knowledge. Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and understanding about grammar and grammar teaching informed what these teachers considered essential for grammar pedagogy. The study also recognised that teachers' patterns of cognition and pedagogical practice were influenced by their understanding of the system in which they work and their roles within it, that is to say, their experience within a specific context. Moreover, a regular pattern between the ways teachers thought about their work and the ways they acted in the language classes was detected (Andrews, 2003). Therefore, the relationships between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices are also observed in the teaching of grammar in ELT.

To sum up, it appears that language teachers' knowledge and beliefs on teaching and learning inform their teaching process to a large extent. Teachers' learning and teaching experiences, professional development and academic background tend to influence teachers' beliefs and the development of knowledge. In addition, there is an interdependent relationship between teachers' knowledge and their practice. Teachers reach to new understandings of teaching and learning through practice and reflection. These new understandings become part of their knowledge, knowledge that teachers depend on for their teaching practices (Tsui, 2003). Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices are, therefore, interrelated.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter discusses the methodology and research design for this investigation of English language teaching practices in Mexican higher education. The research was developed through the construction of an interpretive case study of four teachers of English working at a state university in Mexico. The aim of the case study was to increase our understanding of how teachers' practices are informed by their knowledge and beliefs about the teaching of English as a foreign language. It drew on multiple data sources including a focus group session, observations, interviews, conversations and teachers' journals, using a simultaneous data collection process with each participant. A qualitative analysis, where the teachers' talk and teachers' actions were the units of analysis, began with the collection of data. The intention was that both the data collection and data analysis processes inform each other. The case study was developed keeping a reflective attitude and taking care of the ethical aspects that the case study involved. Overall, the conclusions drawn about teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices, were based on a combination of the event observed, the teachers' explanations about the observed event, the teacher's comments outside of the events observed, and my interpretation of all this information, similarly to the process used by Andon (2009).

This chapter is organised in eleven sections. Section 3.1 explains the approach to the study and the ontological and epistemological positions behind the approach. Section 3.2 discusses case studies and their suitability as an inquiry - based strategy for this study. Section 3.3 gives an explanation on the need for reflexivity in the present research. Section 3.4 reviews and discusses ethical issues and how they were addressed. Section 3.5 describes the data collection process followed. Section 3.6 presents the research questions that guided the construction of the case study. Section 3.7 explains the research methods employed for the collection of data. Section 3.8 describes the selection of participants. Section 3.9

describes the pilot stage conducted. Section 3.10 discusses the limitations of the study. Finally, section 3.11 explicates the process developed for the analysis of the data.

3.1 AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Social reality can be seen from distinct dimensions such as objectivism and subjectivism. Within these dimensions, social reality is interpreted from diverse perspectives. For example, from an ontological perspective within objectivism the world exists and is knowable as it really is, thus social reality is external and independent of individuals, whereas, within subjectivism, the world exists but different people construe it in distinct ways (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 10). Concerning epistemological perspectives, positivism is part of the Objectivist stance while Interpretivism is a school of thought within subjectivism. Positivism claims that science supplies “the clearest possible ideal of knowledge” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 11). Nevertheless, the study of human behaviour from a positivist stance appears to be less successful because of the enormous complexity of human nature and behaviours that lack the order and regularity of the natural world. In contrast, Interpretivism, an alternative stance to positivism, denies “the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterised by underlying regularities” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.19). For interpretivists, people do not only construct the world in many distinct manners, they also assign different meaning to their actions to make sense of their behaviour (Cohen et al., 2007). For interpretivists, “reality is socially constructed” (Mertens, 1998, p. 11), and the “social world is constructed by each of us differently, with words and events carrying different meanings for each person and in each situation” (Thomas, 2011, p. 51). Interpretivism focuses on individuals and aims to understand their interpretations of their world (Cohen et al., 2007). There are, therefore, multiple mental conceptions of reality to be understood.

As an educational researcher, I hold a subjective stance in which, from an ontological perspective, I consider that social reality depends on people constructing it, and we construct it in different ways. In addition, epistemologically, I believe that knowledge is

socially constructed. Thus, in accordance with my researcher position and taking into consideration that the aim of the research was to increase our understandings of the teachers' practices for the teaching of English as a foreign language, I regard Interpretivism as the most appropriate approach to this study.

In accordance with an interpretivist approach, this research has attempted to interpret teaching practices, and to understand what the different aspects that they involved meant to the teachers involved in the research. Therefore, analysis of teaching practices taking into consideration the teachers' perspectives has been central to their comprehension (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, since qualitative research seeks to preserve multiple realities, even though they are contradictory (Stake, 1995), an interpretivist approach helps to identify the different conceptions that teachers have of language teaching itself. These conceptions support the construction of a more complete picture of the phenomena as a whole. In addition, following an abductive strategy, I have attempted to enter into the teachers' world, looking for the motives and reasons behind their teaching practices. In this process, awareness of the participants' conceptions of and meanings behind their teaching practices, as well as of the specific elements involved, has been essential for their comprehension. For example, it has been necessary to realise that a participant teacher in the present research considers that English is learnt better through collaborative learning to comprehend her intensive use of pair and teamwork, as well as of her promotion of students' roles as active and independent learners within the language classroom. Moreover, following an interpretivist approach, I have considered, both the help of the participant teachers and the understanding I have developed on the topic, important in interpreting the data used to construct this case study (Mertens, 1998). For example, I have needed the teachers to explain what issues such as meaningful practice mean to them. Accordingly, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the practices of the teachers of English as a foreign language, I have developed a case study, regarded as a qualitative tradition of enquiry (Cresswell, 2007).

3.2 AN INTERPRETIVE CASE STUDY ON TEACHING PRACTICES

Case study is defined as “in-depth investigation of one or more examples of a current social phenomenon, utilizing a variety of sources of data” (Jupp, 2006, p. 20). Case studies offer rich information and different kinds of insights of the phenomenon. However, the case is more than the sum of its parts and has to be understood holistically (Thomas, 2011). This is to say, that a case is an interconnection of elements with a deeper meaning when it is thought of as a whole. Case studies have been categorised in different ways. For example, Drake and Heath (2011) classified them in descriptive, explanatory and exploratory studies that seek to present the reality of the research context. Exploratory studies initiate the analysis of an event that will be deeply studied in further research. A descriptive study intends to offer a picture of the case under analysis. Explanatory studies try to state the reasons behind the phenomena studied (Jupp, 2006). The present research would be an exploratory- explanatory study. It would be explanatory because I have constructed it aiming to increase understanding of the reasons behind the teaching practices of English teachers in higher education in Mexico. Nevertheless, it would be exploratory since some issues required further research. Stake (1995, 2005) classifies cases in intrinsic and instrumental case studies. The intrinsic case is conducted to develop a better understanding of the specific case. The instrumental case aims “to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalisation” (Stake, 2005, p. 137). From Stake’s perspective, this study would be an instrumental case because it attempts to get insight into a particular issue, the teaching practice of the case study teachers.

Since case studies search to comprehend the individual or group perceptions of the events (Cohen et al., 2007), they are appropriate for developing understanding of teachers’ perceptions of the teaching of English as a foreign language. Case studies explore one case or a small number of cases in depth and study naturally occurring phenomenon (Thomas, 2011), also making them suitable for the in-depth study of the teaching practices of four teachers within their classroom. In addition, case studies aim to identify relationships (Thomas, 2011) and are helpful for researching how and why questions (Yin, 1994). These aspects are central to the present research since the intention was to develop understanding

of the language teachers' reasons behind their teaching practices, how they are informed by their knowledge and beliefs, and of the relationships between them.

I considered the development of a case study an appropriate strategy of enquiry for this research because identifying teachers' beliefs and knowledge was a complex task. Beliefs and procedural knowledge must be inferred from what teachers say and do since they cannot be directly observed or measured (Pajares, 1992; Andon, 2009). Although, teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs have been separated in research as an attempt to explain them more clearly, this is difficult to do because, as explained in the previous chapter, teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs about subject matter are generally interlinked (Borg, 2003). Rich data is required to be able to infer them. Consequently, I observed, conversed with and interviewed the case study teachers several times. I also video-recorded one of their classes and asked them for five reflective journals. Taking into account that beliefs are regarded evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable (Basturkmen et al., 2004), in the interviews and in a teachers' journal, I specifically elicited some teachers' beliefs through questions such as: How should English be taught? What roles should students have in English classes? What type of interaction patterns should be organised in an English class? The characteristics of case study research are summarised in the following table:

Case studies...	
Investigate ...	one case or a small number of cases
Collect and analyse data about ...	a large number of features of each case
Study ...	naturally occurring cases
Examine ...	the case in detail
Use ...	many methods and sources of data
Aim to ...	look at relationships and processes
Produce ...	rich interconnected information
Facilitate ...	analytical insights

Table 3.1: Case study characteristics (adapted from Thomas, 2011, p. 11)

In addition, case studies of language teachers' knowledge and/or, beliefs and teaching practices within distinct contexts developed by Borg (1998, 1999, 2001), Johnston and Goettsch (2000), Basturkem, et al., (2004), Farrel and Lim (2005), Andon (2009), Phipps and Borg (2009) and Tsui, (2009) among others, illustrate their suitability for in-depth studies. In spite of the fact that case studies produce concrete, context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2001), these case studies have contributed to increased understanding of language teachers' cognition and practices since they have offered many kinds of insights on the phenomena. For example, Andon and Eckerth (2009, p. 18), through a case study of the practices of UK-based ESL teachers, identified that "teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practical principles are not only developed through reading and attending formal training", but also from informal routes such as discussions with colleagues. Consequently, the development of a case study to research the knowledge, beliefs and practices of Mexican teachers of English as a foreign language in higher education is appropriate.

I decided to construct a case study of the teachers' practices for the teaching of English as a foreign language at higher education in Mexico through four cases to strengthen the research (Yin, 2003). The participant teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices were investigated through a within-case analysis of each case and a cross case analysis of the four cases. Therefore, the study could be considered a multiple-case study (Yin, 2003). However, I did not follow a replication design that would be similar to conducting multiple experiments, as I constructed the four cases simultaneously. I judged that this number of participant teachers would offer enough information to illustrate the case as well as a quantity of information that I, as a teacher-researcher, could manage. The development of four cases was very helpful because of the opportunities this provided to explore similarities and differences in teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices.

3.3. REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity has been essential for this study because the interpretative approach underlines that research cannot be independent from researchers (Mertens, 1998; Creswell, 2009) since the researcher is central in the construction of the collection, selection and interpretation of data (Finlay, 2003). Reflexivity is a dynamic experience that requires the researcher to become completely involved in the data and research process and, at the same time, to be able to distance herself from both the data and the process so that she can reflect on them (Finlay, 2003). Reflexivity, as Drake and Heath (2011, p. 60) state, “means recognising the part one plays in the research process”. For the present research, being reflexive has meant reflecting during the construction of the case study on the data I was obtaining, as well as on my research actions, choices and decisions with awareness of my thoughts, experiences and self. Researchers therefore need an awareness of their own values, beliefs, personal background, and role as a researcher and how these aspects may influence the development of the research (Simons, 2009).

Reflexivity has been fundamental to this study because of my role as an insider researcher. I was an insider because I developed this case study with English language teachers who work for the same department that I work for, in spite of the fact that they work for a different program and we seldom get together. I needed to be aware of power relationships because the participant teachers are not only my colleagues, but they were also my students during their university studies. It was not possible to avoid this relationship because all the teachers working for the English teaching programme at the university were my students at some time. It could be thought that the teachers might have agreed to participate in the research because of my position as their former tutor, an issue that is not possible to disentangle, but which needs to be taken into consideration. Therefore, in order to address power inequalities and the possibility that the data were influenced by my former position, I encouraged the participant teachers to consider themselves as collaborators in the study (Dunne, et al., 2005). To do this, I underlined my role as a doctoral student who required their collaboration to develop a doctoral thesis. I emphasised my need for their support in understanding the issues under research. I explained to them the aspects that their

collaboration encompassed, such as their consent to being observed and interviewed. I also underlined during the whole data collection stage, that I regarded their information, reasons and opinions essential for the construction of the case study research and interpretation of the data. I cannot state for certain that the teachers behaved like collaborators in the research, but I felt that they did not behave as my students. Moreover, all of them have told me that they were glad to participate in the research and found it interesting reading their case studies. I consider that, I have been able to obtain authentic responses from them, something regarded as an advantage of insider research (Drake and Heath, 2011).

In addition, being reflexive has permitted me to realise that being a practitioner researcher has presented strengths and limitations in the development of the case study. I regard as a main strength my knowledge of ELT, ELT education and the context I am conducting the research since I have been part of the Language Department staff in charge of the BA in ELT for almost 20 years. This knowledge has facilitated my comprehension not only of the participant teachers' actions and explanations, since we share the language and the referents, but also of the phenomenon under study. I consider that the research and my practice as teacher educator have informed each other, a strength of developing research as practitioner researcher as underlined by Drake and Heath (2011). Nevertheless, I realise that my background knowledge, my perspectives, my beliefs on ELT and ELT education could have become a lens that limited my observations and influenced my interpretations. Thus, on-going awareness of these aspects has been essential. Moreover, being a teacher educator for almost 20 years has internalised this function within me. Therefore, reflexivity has been central to prevent a way of seeing that being a teacher educator and my familiarity with the context could cause. I have not intended to stop being an ELT educator, but to become a researcher as well. Becoming a researcher has been a major challenge since being a researcher presented a new paradigm. It demanded, among other aspects, an inquisitive attitude, a change in the focus when observing, conversing and questioning the teachers as well as a change in my status with respect to them. As a specific reflective exercise, I wrote two lists, contrasting what it was expected from me as teacher educator and what it

was expected from me as a researcher when observing and interviewing presented in Table 3.2.

Teacher Educator	Researcher
1. Observing classes to identify weak teaching aspects	1. Observing classes to understand teachers' practices
2. Observation instrument: specific aspects according to the objectives of the BA subjects	2. Extensive field notes
3. Role: expert/ advisor; different status; I help them to improve their teaching practices	3. Role: colleague; equal status; they help me to understand their teaching practices
4. When observing my thought is focused on connecting the phenomena with the BA in ELT contents to raise awareness on these links seeking for teacher improvement	4. When observing my thought is focused on connecting the phenomena with my research questions and teachers' narratives seeking for improving my understanding
5. When observing I have specific expectancies on the development of the class based on my knowledge of the teachers' plans which I have checked and approved	5. When observing I have general expectancies on the development of the class based on my ELT experience as a teacher and an educator
6. Conversations with teachers to check if they identify their weaknesses and strengths and their consequences	6. Conversations with participants to find out their reasons for their practices
7. Questioning seeking to raise teachers' awareness	7. Questioning seeking to increase my understanding
8. Listening to teachers to give them my view points and advise to continue their development	8. Listening to participants to clarify my ideas to increase my understanding
9. Evaluative attitude	9. Discovery/Inquisitive attitude

Table 3.2: Contrasting Observation and interviewing behaviours

As a teacher educator, I am used to agreeing with the teacher on the aspects of the class that are going to be observed and later on, these aspects are discussed in the feedback sessions. I mainly ask teachers to give their opinions on the adequacy of their teaching techniques and to offer alternatives to develop them better. Teachers, in general, expect me to give them

my opinion, advice and evaluation of their performance. In contrast, as a researcher, when observing, conversing and interviewing, it is central to link the phenomena with the research questions. Moreover, I intended to observe the entire class and describe the teaching practices as completely as possible, through field notes. My role was also that of a colleague with the intention of reducing status differences as much as possible. In the conversation with the participant teachers, I attempted to elicit the reasons and thoughts that motivated their practices as well as to clarify my ideas. My attitude and my actions were not evaluative but inquisitive, seeking to improve my understanding of the teachers' practices. Therefore, writing the lists was a reflective exercise that helped me analyse and develop activities I am used to conducting, such as observing, talking, questioning and listening to teachers, from a very different perspective and with a very different purpose.

Additionally, in order to reduce subjective misunderstandings (Stake, 1995) and strengthen this qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998), I developed a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning or interpretation (Stake, 2005). I conducted observations, conversations, and different types of interviews as well as analysis of teachers' journals. The use of different methods allowed me to take different actions (Patton, 2002). I could compare what the teachers said in the interviews and conversations to their teaching practice within the classroom. I could identify aspects that needed to be further explored. I could also clarify, confirm and disconfirm my own interpretations. Overall, I could construct a more holistic understanding of the language teaching practices. In addition, to strengthen this study and reduce misunderstandings, I asked for participant checking. I sent each of the participant teachers his or her case, from 6000 to 7000 words. I asked for their opinions on the contents (Creswell, 2009; Simons, 2009) that covered descriptions of their classes, quotes from the interviews and conversations, information from their journals as well as my interpretations of the data. They agreed with the stated information in their cases and their interpretation in general and few clarifications were done. I also asked for peer examination. I asked a colleague to comment on the data I was obtaining and on my interpretations of it. Although it was only twice, it helped me to continue with the process with more confidence. Furthermore, as a means of stimulating reflexivity (Ballinger, 2003),

I have kept a research diary (Drake and Heath, 2011) that helped me reflect on the research process I was developing as well as on my personal development as a researcher. I have also presented sections of the case study research in conferences, and this has helped me analyse and reflect on the research data and process from a different academic perspective. Overall, I have intended to keep a reflexive attitude through the whole development of the case study research.

3.4 ETHICAL ISSUES

The development of research always involves an ethical dimension (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative research, ethical issues tend to be related to the collection of data and the dissemination of findings (Merriam, 1998). The present case study has addressed this ethical dimension in the following manner. First, as a researcher student of the University of Sussex, I had to ensure that my case study research followed the School of Education and Social work Guidelines on Research Ethics and to obtain ethical approval from the University. The process made me realise and reflect on aspects such as the confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and right to withdraw of the participants as well as on the manner of addressing these ethical issues in the development of the research. This awareness made me take special care of these aspects in the development of the study as well as to prevent the collection of data and the dissemination of findings causing any harm to the participant teachers since an essential ethical principle in research is ‘do not harm’ (Simons, 2009). Conversations on these issues with my supervisor were illuminating.

Following approaches established under the ethical approval process, I talked with three possible participants about the topic of the study and what participating in the study would imply for them. Two of the teachers agreed to participate. I then asked two other teachers who immediately accepted. Being aware of the teachers’ heavy schedule, I asked them to choose the most convenient date to have the focus group interview, which was first step of the data collection process. Before conducting the focus group interview, in addition to the

research information sheet that I had already given to them (see appendix 1), I informed the participant teachers about the topic of the study and explained what was required from them again. I also made assurances relating to confidentiality and anonymity. For example, the names of the participants were to be changed to protect their anonymity (Creswell, 2007). I also explained to the teachers their right to withdraw as well as to decline from participating. The purpose of this action was that the teachers knew what they were committing themselves to do and able to freely decide to take part in the research because I did not want my previous role as their teacher to compel them to participate. Then, I asked them to sign a consent form (see appendix 2). Additionally, I underlined the importance of their contribution in the focus group, and some rules designed to protect confidentiality were agreed before conducting the focus group interview (Wilkinson, 2004; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999). For example, it was agreed to not discuss the participants' opinions with anybody out of the study. It was also agreed to not make any reference to what was going to be discussed in the focus group in any other academic or non-academic situation.

In addition, I asked the participant teachers to ask for their students' consent to have an observer during four classes and video record another class, explaining that students were not the focus of the study, and asking them to give them an information sheet written in Spanish but also translated into English (see appendix 3). Teachers and students are used to being recorded as part of the BA in ELT programme and therefore I could argue that video recording did not raise a significant ethical issue for them. The audio and video recordings done during the research process are to be destroyed once the thesis is completed and the data no longer needed.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

I conducted the data collection process for the construction of the case study in four phases. I also followed the same process with the four teachers simultaneously. As discussed above, I first conducted a focus group interview with the four participants. Then, I observed

and had a short conversation with each teacher every week for four weeks. I observed all of them teaching the same topics in order to reduce the differences that the teaching of a distinct topic could cause. Then, for the fifth or sixth week, the participant teachers chose a class to be video-recorded, a recording that was discussed with the teacher in the following week. I also arranged to have an individual interview with each teacher in the fifth week. It is relevant to state that the dates for the interviews and video recording, the schedule of observations and short conversations were chosen by the participant teachers and set in advance, actions that permitted the full participation of the teachers and avoided interfering with their daily responsibilities. The teachers also gave me a reflective journal every week, and I even had a phone interview with each participant to clarify aspects that came up in the writing of each participant case study. The whole data collection process was conducted in English since in the language department teachers are used to carrying out academic work in the language they teach. The process is summarised as follows:

- Focus group interview made up of four English language teachers in order to discuss teachers' base knowledge, beliefs and practices in ELT.
- Observation of one module: Teachers teaching one 50 min English class each week for four weeks.
- Video recording one teaching session in order to discuss teaching practices with the teacher.
- Individual interviews to clarify information obtained during the research process.

Additional data was collected from:

- Short conversations (max. 10 min) with each teacher prior to or following each observation.
- A reflective journal kept by each teacher for the duration of the module.

3.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The conviction that teachers' knowledge and beliefs inform their teaching practices led this case study research to be focused on the relationships between these three elements. The construction of the case study was guided by the following research questions, questions that evolved through the development of the research:

1. What forms of knowledge do the case study teachers draw on in their classroom practices?
2. What are the case study teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning?
3. How do the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of the case study teachers interact?
4. Is it possible to draw any implications for the education of English language teachers in higher education in Mexico from this case study?

3.7 METHODS

An important characteristic of case studies is the use of multiple methods and sources of data for their construction (Yin, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Thomas, 2011). The present case study has been constructed using seven different methods, methods that were selected with the purpose of obtaining rich information about teachers' knowledge and beliefs, directly given and explained by the participant teachers as well as from observing their actual teaching practices in their occurring context. Combining observations with conversations and interviews is essential for increasing understanding since neither observation nor interviews offer a complete picture of teachers' performance (Breen et al., 2001). Moreover, in my opinion, each of these methods expands, explains or confirms the information obtained with the other research method. The following table summarises the data collection activities:

Data Collection Activities	Frequency	Total
Focus group interview with the 4 participant teachers	Once at the beginning of the data collection	1
Observations of each teacher	Once a week	16
Pre or Post observation conversations	Once a week	16
Video-recording of a class of each teacher	Once in the fifth week	4
Interview on the video-recorded class with each teacher	Once in the sixth or seventh week	4
Interview on beliefs with each teacher	Once in the fifth or sixth week	4
Weekly pieces of journals of each teacher	Three times First three weeks	12
Weekly written reflections of each teacher	Two times Fourth and fifth week	8
Final interview with each teacher	Once at the end of the data collection	4
Participant check of his/her case study	Once when the case was written	4

Table 3.3: Data collection activities

3.7.1 Focus group

The focus group is a method of collecting data that involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion focused on a particular topic (Wilkinson, 2004). Focus groups are helpful for exploring people's knowledge as well as their points of view and how they are constructed (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999). They also "give rise synergistically to insights and solutions that would not come about without them" (Patton, 2002, p. 16). I take this to mean that, through the discussions that take place in focus groups, participants may become aware of aspects that they would not realise individually. I decided to conduct a focus group, as the first step of the data collection process, to start exploring teachers' knowledge and beliefs about English language teaching. I employed a guide, with some indicative questions, regarded as essential by Patton (2002) for doing

focus group interviews. The questions were about the sort of knowledge is needed to teach English, about the best way of teaching English, about how they think English is learnt; why they think students need to learn English and what knowing English means. These questions were planned to help participants focus on the topic and share their viewpoints and experiences on two central issues: teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and their relation to teaching practices. They were not assumptions, but provocative questions for the participant teachers to discuss. For example, with the question, 'What is the best way of teaching English for you?' the teachers' immediate response was that the best way of teaching was according to students' characteristics, underlining that a single best way of teaching English does not exist, and then, they talked about their teaching preferences based on their knowledge and beliefs. In the focus group, I facilitated and moderated the discussion between participants asking questions, keeping the flow of the discussion and encouraging full participation from the four teachers involved, following Wilkinson's advice (2004).

The focus group permitted me to start exploring the knowledge and beliefs of the participant teachers. It also allowed them to start being involved with the topic of the study. Nevertheless, some of the beliefs discussed in the focus group presented some inconsistencies with the practices observed and the beliefs discussed in the conversations that followed the observations. For example, the teachers, in general stated that language teaching and learning should be focused on communication. Nevertheless, teaching techniques as the mechanical practice of grammar and pronunciation were observed. Moreover, in the conversations conducted after the observations, the teachers explained this type of teaching practice in terms of core beliefs which are, as discussed previously, those grounded in experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009). This aspect would be a limitation of the focus group because it only raised discussion on peripheral beliefs -beliefs that are theoretically embraced (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Core beliefs were not discussed in the focus group interview. Different research methods appear to elicit different types of beliefs. For example, in this case, the focus group seemed to have elicited theoretical beliefs (beliefs about what should be) that are informed by received knowledge. However, the beliefs elicited in the conversations conducted at a later stage about actual teaching

practices may have been beliefs more deeply rooted in reality (beliefs about what is), reflecting teachers' experiential knowledge (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Nevertheless, although the beliefs elicited by the focus group needed to be clarified and complemented in the subsequent researching steps, I would argue that it was a helpful initial exploratory step.

3.7.2 Observations

Observation means to look, listen and record (Silverman, 2008). The main purpose of observations is to produce data that is “sufficiently descriptive that the reader can understand what occurred and how it occurred” (Patton, 2002, p. 23). A characteristic of observations relevant to this interpretivist case study is that observations not only aim to describe the setting, activities and people involved, but also the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed (Patton, 2002). Therefore, observations help to obtain a deeper comprehension of the case (Stake, 1995). The observation of actual teaching practices was essential for understanding the English language teachers since those observations allowed me to collect first-hand information about the teaching processes in their usual context (Silverman, 2006). I decided to conduct observations within a single module in order to see the different language teaching process that the teaching of English requires. The observations were developed in classes that emphasised the teaching of different language aspects, grammar, development of reading and writing, development of listening and development of speaking. The different language aspects involved distinct teaching practices that depended on the language skill or system that was being taught and on the language learning stage, among other aspects. I observed aspects, such as teaching techniques, teachers' roles, interaction patterns and procedures. I employed an observational protocol to record information (Creswell, 2007) (see appendix 4). Following Creswell's example it included, descriptive notes, reflective notes and a section for aspects that need to be clarified with the teacher. I also had short conversations with teachers before or after the class observation. These conversations, considered by Stake (1995) as “roads to distinct realities”, seek teachers' own explanations for their specific teaching practices. These conversations, as well as the interviews and journal writing, were spaces for teachers to express themselves since a key concern, due to my subjective stance, is the

understanding of the teaching practices from the participants' perspectives (Merriam, 1998).

I realize that having an observer in the classroom may affect the behaviour of the teacher and students. Reactivity is a change in the behaviour of participants in a study because they know that they are observed, however, it can be reduced through habituation (Cohen et. al., 2007). I take this to mean that when observations last for a long time, participants become used to being observed. I would argue that the risk of reactivity from the participant teachers was reduced because they were used to being observed as part of the BA in ELT programme. Student teachers are observed by supervisors and peers in six of the eight semesters that compose the BA, and English language teachers are also observed by BA students that, in order to carry out different learning tasks, need to observe language classes. Therefore, being observed could be an ordinary situation within this specific context. Moreover, in this study, the classes were not observed once but five times.

3.7.3 Video-recordings

Video-recordings are a tool for producing important records of researched events that can be analysed to expand their interpretation (Stake, 1995). Nevertheless, similar to observations, video-recording of classes may affect the behaviour of the teacher and students. To facilitate that the teachers conduct their classes in the way they usually did, I asked the participants to choose which of their classes of the last week of the module to video-record. I also decided to provide them with the equipment the day they chose permitting them to follow the procedure they were used to since being recorded was also a practice of the BA in ELT programme. Since I was not there, they installed the camera where they considered appropriate and they turned it on and off at the beginning and at the end of the class.

I found that the video-recordings allowed me to observe classes from different angles and to notice aspects that I did not perceive the first time since I could observe the same class several times. For example, the first time I watched the video recording of one of the participant teachers, her use of a song to have students practice listening and speaking as well as the students involvement in the class got my attention. The class seemed to be different from the previous observed classes since students were neither working in teams nor doing an information gap activity. Nevertheless, by watching it again, I could perceive the systematic teaching process that appears to characterise her teaching.

For the analysis of the video-recordings of English classes, I employed a reverse strategy: data driven research. In the implementation of this strategy, there are not pre-formulated questions because the data will prompt inquiry (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). I take this to mean that I watched the video recordings without having in mind a specific aspect to observe. Nevertheless, through watching the recording, I noticed some common or uncommon or even unusual actions or conversations which I considered important to discuss with the teachers to understand the reasons behind them. In the interview with the teachers, they watched the parts of the video recording to be discussed. The teachers, in general, explained their actions based on their knowledge and/or on their beliefs. Therefore, the video-recordings, records of what happened as it happened in the classes (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003), did not only help me investigate what teachers say and do, by specifically analysing their actions and conversations, but also as a way of triangulating the information. In this study, as it was explained before, data triangulation was through the use of different sources (Patton, 2002) with the purpose of developing converging lines of enquiry that contributed to the quality of the case study (Yin, 2003). This is to say that case questioning was done from different angles, utilising different instruments such as observations, interviews and reflective journals. The use of different research instruments facilitated a more holistic interpretation of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998) that allowed me to reach conclusions that appear to be more feasible as well as to develop a better understanding of the case.

3.7.4 Interviews and Conversations

Two interviews and five conversations were conducted to construct this case study. The first interview was conducted on the fifth week of the data collection process, and the second interview took place in the last week of the data collection process. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes, whereas, conversations required between eight and ten minutes. The conversations were conducted after each of the observed class of three of the participant teachers. In the case of a participant teacher that needed to leave immediately after the observed class, the conversations took place before the classes. I realised that talking with the teacher after the class was more useful since the conversations were about aspects that have recently occurred and teachers easily remembered. The conversations aimed to understand the teachers' reasons behind the selection and implementation of specific teaching practices. The interviews as well as the conversations were semi-structured since they were only guided by a set of questions or issues to be explored (Merriam, 1998) (see appendix 5).

The purpose of interviewing, in qualitative research, is "to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2004, p. 341). In accordance with my subjective position, social reality depends on people constructing it, and we construct it in different ways. In the present research, therefore, the interviews and the short conversations were designed to provide opportunities to perceive teaching practices through the participant teachers' eyes (Cohen et al., 2007). They aimed to be spaces for the teachers to talk about the reasons behind their teaching practices as well as for me, as researcher to clarify some issues observed and confirm or disconfirm my interpretations. Interviews are essential sources of information in the construction of case studies (Yin, 2003). Nevertheless, interviewing is not an easy task because the researcher needs to ask appropriate questions on the line of enquiry as well as to ask them in a friendly and nonthreatening way to succeed in the interview (Yin, 2003). Interviewing also demands neutrality and rapport. Neutrality is being non-judgmental of the content of what is being said, and rapport involves respect, understanding and care of the participants' motivation in sharing their information (Patton, 2002). Awareness of these aspects guided my way of interviewing and conversing with the

case study teachers. I took, therefore, special care to not show approval or disapproval of teachers' information nor to force them to respond to my questioning.

In addition, "the quality of information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (Patton, 2002, p.341). Moreover, different kind of questions will generate different information: the wording used in asking questions is critical for obtaining the type of information desired (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, questions directed to elicit the teachers' beliefs contained words such as 'should' or 'essential', taking into consideration that beliefs are considered evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable (Pajares, 1992). For example, questions such as, in your opinion, what should the focus of English classes be? And which teaching actions are essential for English teaching, in your opinion? were employed when interviewing teachers in this study.

I conducted two interviews with each participant teacher. The first one aimed to discuss teachers' beliefs to enrich the information that I had obtained through the short conversations. It was guided through questions such as: What roles should teachers have in English classes? What should the focus of English classes be? What type of interaction patterns should be developed in an English class? The second interview was the last contact with the teachers. It was also a semi-structured interview done by phone. This final interview aimed at clarifying final issues such as teachers' motivations for becoming language teachers and, opinions on working within different contexts. These issues emerged during the study and were considered worth clarifying.

Nevertheless, the short conversations as well as the interviews sought teachers' own interpretations of their teaching practices. For the construction of this case study, combining observations with conversations and interviews was central to obtaining a more complete picture of teachers' practices and, in this manner, to enhance understanding of the rationale behind their teaching practices. All the conversations and interviews, with the

exception of the final one, were face to face and recorded. The final conversation with each of the teachers, conducted as a closing of the data collection stage, was done by telephone because, at that time, the university was on a holiday period.

3.7.5 Teachers' journals and reflections

I also employed teachers' reflective journals in the development of the case study, not only to corroborate evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003) and strengthen triangulation of data, but also to add depth to the case (Simons, 2009). I solicited teachers writing journals because they could offer teachers the opportunity to express more inner thoughts on their teaching practices in relation to their beliefs and knowledge. Journals covered two aspects: a brief description of a teaching issue (activity or experience) and teachers' thoughts and reasons for their actions. However, since keeping a journal or a diary is a minority teacher habit (Alaszewski, 2006), I tried to minimise intrusion into teachers' daily practice by asking them for informal journals. I asked for journals with minimal structure to allow teachers to express themselves (Alaszewski, 2006). I gave the participant teachers journal forms with instructions to guide them towards the teaching issues in which the study was interested. I mainly asked the teachers to describe briefly an activity implemented during the week and to explain their reasons in selecting this activity for their classes. Nevertheless, I realised that the instrument was providing the same type of information because, from the first to the third journal, the teachers tended to describe teaching activities and they explained them in terms of teaching objectives. In spite of the fact that this information was helpful to illustrate teachers' knowledge, I wanted to expand the data on teachers' reasons for their practices by also eliciting their beliefs. Therefore, I changed the fourth and fifth teachers' journals, formulating specific questions to elicit their beliefs, such as: In your opinion, what should be the main roles of the students in an English language class (see appendix 6). I also asked teachers to take some time to reflect before giving their opinions. I titled these instruments teachers' reflections.

3.8 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

The participants in the study were four Mexican teachers, two women and two men between 24 and 28 years old, who taught English language to undergraduates at a state university in Mexico. They were selected to be part of a purposeful sampling, a sampling composed of participants that, according to the researchers' criterion, could help to understand the central issues of the study (Merriam, 1998; Jupp, 2006; Creswell, 2007 and 2009). For the selection of participants, I took into consideration teachers' willingness to contribute to the study (Stake, 1995) since participating in the research would add more work to their already heavy schedule. The four teachers agreed to participate in the research in the initial conversation. In addition, I selected teachers that followed the same BA in ELT 2003 curriculum. However, one of them studied the BA in ELT in four years because he already had the English level required to start the BA program as explained in Chapter One. The other three case study teachers studied the BA in ELT in five years because they studied the propedeutic year to improve their level of English. The four case study teachers worked for the same English teaching programme, and taught English at the same level to university students that study English as a university requirement, delimiting the case to teachers who shared these characteristics and context (Creswell, 2007). If teachers shared these characteristics, the differences or similarities would be more centred on their knowledge and beliefs that are the focus of this studied.

Participant	English levels taught	Educational contexts taught
Paul	Basic and intermediate	University and Elementary school
Pam	Basic, intermediate and upper-intermediate Business English	University and Business Company
Keith	Basic, intermediate and upper-intermediate	University and Elementary school
Karla	Basic and intermediate	University and High school

Table 3.4: The participants' characteristics

As Table 3.4 shows, all the four participant teachers have also taught different English levels and worked in different educational contexts. Background information, considered relevant to the case study such as, first teaching recruitment, teaching experience, updating courses about the participant teachers, whose names were changed in order to preserve their anonymity, is offered in the next sections.

3.8.1 Paul's background

Paul decided to become an English teacher because he liked teaching and, because he could speak the language. He started teaching while he was studying the BA in ELT. Because of his level of English proficiency, he was accepted as a teacher in the English in Public Primary School Program in 2004 in spite of the fact that he did not have any teaching qualifications. However, before starting working, he was required to take an intensive, four week course on basic techniques for teaching English as a foreign language to children. In 2009, when he obtained his bachelor degree, he was hired by the university as an English teacher for the Foreign Language Program. He has also attended workshops on different topics of language teaching to children that the English in Public Primary School Program organises on a yearly basis. In addition, he has participated in two international education programmes. Paul is aware of the different characteristics of the educational contexts in which he works. He explained that children are very demanding and need monitoring all the time. When working with university students, he considered it was important to set rules at the beginning and to follow them through the whole course.

3.8.2 Pam's background

Pam decided to be a teacher when she was a young teenager because she realised that she enjoyed teaching and also because she considered that she was good at teaching. She started giving English private classes to children when she was in the fifth semester of the BA in ELT. When she was in seventh semester, she was hired by a company to teach

English to international executives. At present, she continues working there. When she finished her BA in ELT in 2011, she was hired by her university as a language teacher to teach English to undergraduate students in the Foreign Language Program. She realises that there are significant differences between teaching in a company and teaching in a university. Those differences are at the level of context, students, and language and teaching contents since she explains that the context of an international company differs from the context of a state university a great deal. The students in the company are foreign executives who do not speak Spanish. In the university, they are undergraduate students who study English because it is a university obligation. In the company she teaches English for specific purposes (ESP), and does not follow a specific program adapting her classes to students' current needs. In contrast, as a university teacher, Pam teaches general English, following a specific language program.

3.8.3 Keith's background

Keith decided to study the BA in ELT because this program would permit him to teach at different school levels. In fact, Keith teaches English in a primary school and in two universities. He, as in the case of Paul, started working for public primary schools when he was in the fifth semester of the BA in ELT. Keith was hired by his university as an English teacher when he finished the BA in ELT in 2010. In the same year, he also started working for a technological university. Keith has participated in the teacher development courses that the English for public primary school program conducts annually. He has also attended several language teacher congresses and he has joined MEXTESOL (Mexican association of teachers of English as a second language). In addition, Keith, like Paul, has participated in an international education program as a teacher's collaborator and as a teacher's assistant.

At present, Keith teaches English for specific purposes in the technological university and general English in the public primary school, as well as in the state university. He said that, in general, he approaches the teaching of English in a similar way in the three situations. Nevertheless, Keith explained that he adapted the activities by selecting topics and the level

of language according to his students' profile. He also explained that he always wanted to be a dynamic teacher whose classes promoted enjoyable learning.

3.8.4 Karla's background

Karla first started studying Business Administration. However, she soon discovered that office work and numbers were not for her. Then, because she liked English very much, she decided to study something related to this language. She found that she also liked teaching so she finally decided to do a career in English language teaching. As in the cases of Paul and Keith, she began teaching English in a public high school while she was studying the BA in ELT. Karla has also worked for two private universities for three years and for a private primary school for two years. In 2012, she was hired by the Language Department in university where she studied her BA in ELT. Karla finished her BA studies, and she decided to expand her teaching working horizons by following an MA program. She has also attended the updating teaching courses offered by the different institutions where she has worked. At present, she continues working for both institutions, the high school where she had her first professional teaching experience and for her university. She considers that the main difference between her high school classes and her university classes is the size of the groups because in the university 25 students compose the groups, while in the high school she has groups of 45 to 50 students. She feels that this situation makes her conduct her classes in a different manner. In the university classes, she carries out a lot of oral practice and encourages communication whereas her classes at high school are more focused on grammar aspects and have students work more in a written way. It appears that contextual factors, such as class size in high school, cause tensions between Karla's beliefs and her teaching practices. Contextual factors influence the way in which teachers act in accordance with their beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

All the four participant teachers were teachers of English 2 which is the second of the four courses at basic level that university students should study as university exit requirement, as shown in Table 3.5.

Participant	Number of Students	Number of Students' majors:
Paul	9 men and 10 women	6 different majors
Pam	9 men and 11 women	4 different majors
Keith	8 men 19 women	13 different majors
Karla	14 men and 12women	4 different majors

Table 3.5: The characteristics of the classes

Nineteen to twenty-seven students from different majors attended the classes being observed. They study English within a foreign language program to fulfil a university graduation requirement.

3.9 PILOT STAGE

I carried out a pilot stage to refine the research methods before the actual data collection stage. I worked with a teacher with similar experiences as those of the sample. The pilot stage consisted of:

- An initial interview
- An observation of a class
- A pre and a post class conversation

- A video recording of a class
- A written reflection

In the initial interview, I used the indicative questions planned for the focus group interview such as what sort of knowledge is needed to teach English, what is the best way of teaching English, how they think English is learnt and why they think students need to learn English. From using these questions in the pilot stage, I became aware of the need to plan more indicative questions in order to conduct the focus group interview. For example, what students should do to learn English, if students know English, what they should be able to do, and what teaching means for the participant teachers. In addition, I was able to calculate the time needed for the focus group interview. When undertaking the pilot classroom observation, I used the observation schedule designed for this purpose as explained earlier and, I realised that it was more practical and less time consuming to take notes directly on the computer. During the pilot stage, I also became aware of having conversations before and after the class observed was going to be problematic since the participant teachers only had a ten-minute break between classes. Thus, I decided to have only one conversation, permitting the teachers to choose the most convenient time for them taking into consideration their class schedule. The video recording of the class did not present any problem for the teacher in the pilot stage, however, the reviewing of the video recording of a class allowed me to realise that this action would require much time. I also realised that specific time and place arrangements should be set for the analysis of the video recordings with the participant teachers in advanced. From the pilot of the teacher's journal form, I noticed that the instructions were not appropriate for eliciting the information desired. I rewrote them asking the teachers, directly, for their knowledge and beliefs that supported their practice, following the pilot teacher's suggestions.

In addition, the pilot stage helped me realise the type of problems that my position as the participants' former tutor could cause. I detected a desire to help me from the participant teacher. Although he offered real information, he tried to guess if that was the type of information, I needed. I also noticed his search for my approval of his performance in class.

Therefore, I decided that emphasising my position, as a doctoral student as well as underlining the importance of the participants in the research since the beginning of the data collection process would be central, as explained above. Furthermore, through the pilot stage, I was able to experience being a researcher, focusing all my thoughts and actions on the research topic and process. Overall, this stage allowed me to identify some aspects that could hinder the research, particularly my position as a participants' former tutor. It also helped me to anticipate some problems in terms of practicalities, and in general, to be better prepared for fieldwork.

3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY

The two main limitations of this study were lack of time and my awareness of the fact that my internalised role as teacher educator could hinder my researcher development. When interviewing the case study teachers, I anticipated that my experience as a teacher educator would interfere with the research process. I tried to elicit the reasons and thoughts that motivated their teaching practices with a neutral, empathetic attitude rather than with an evaluative attitude, typical of a higher-status tutor. Therefore, I took special care not to force teachers to come up with answers with the only purpose of responding to me nor to impose my researcher agenda. Thus, it has not been possible for this case study to clearly explain some inconsistencies between some teachers' practices and their manifested beliefs. These inconsistencies could have been caused by contextual factors and/or by the different types of beliefs -peripheral and core beliefs- that teachers hold. Nevertheless, I considered that more interviews specifically focused on this issue that entailed more time than that allocated by the International Doctorate, would be required for this to be clearly understood.

I conducted short conversations with the participant teachers that lasted from eight to ten minutes to elicit teachers' reasons behind their teaching practices, I realised that this

amount of time did not permit an in-depth discussion of all of the teachers' reasons underpinning their practices. However, I could not extend the conversations because of the teachers' heavy schedule. I tried to compensate for this situation by conducting an interview with each participant on a date they would find most convenient. I also extended the interview on the class video-recorded to cover other aspects that needed to be further discussed. Additionally, I conducted a final interview with the four participants by phone since they were on holiday. These decisions were made because, in this case study, analysis of teaching practices taking into consideration the teachers' perspectives was central for their comprehension.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The development of case studies involves some significant challenges such as being able to manage the large amount of data that an in-depth study produces; identifying the interactions between the different dimensions of the case; describing it in detail to illustrate its complexity (Creswell, 2007). Table 3.6 presents the main steps in the analysis of data in the construction of the present case study in the teaching of English as a foreign language. These steps did not follow a consecutive order, nor were most of them undertaken only once. They were rather steps in a cyclical process (Borg, 1998). A particularly challenging step was the construction of a case study of 6000 to 7000 word length for each of the participant teachers. Due to the word limit of this thesis it has not been possible to include each case study in full but one has been provided as an appendix (see Appendix A).

Teachers' observed classes were recorded through field notes that were descriptions and interpretations of teachers' actions and teaching practices

Conversations and interviews were recorded and transcribed

Teachers' journals, field notes and transcriptions were intensively read

Teachers' journals, field notes and transcriptions were codified

The codified data was categorised

Each participant's data was constantly analysed (within-case analysis)

Cross-case analysis was continually developed

A case study of 6000 to 7000 word length of each participant was constructed

A participant check of his/her own case was asked

A cross analysis of the four case studies was developed

Table 3.6: Data analysis steps

Therefore, the challenges faced in case studies were tackled through a cyclical process: analysing data from the moment of collection, using such analyses to feed the following steps, and at the same time making sure all data was related to previous steps (Merriam, 1998). I developed a qualitative analysis where teachers' talk and teachers' actions were the units of analysis in the research on the English language teacher. Teachers' talk was conceptualised as a means to access teachers' knowledge and beliefs (Wilkinson, 2004; Myers and Macnaghten, 1999), while teachers' actions were regarded as representations of their knowledge and beliefs. The data obtained was codified and results of the analysis were illustrated with case study teachers' quotations. The source of each of the teachers' quotations used to explicate a given aspect is provided. This source is represented with a code based on Andon's model (2009). For example, CS1-c3 represents Case-study 1-conversation three (see Appendix 7).

For the analysis of data, following Creswell's model (2009), I conducted an interactive process, where I mainly recorded observations through field notes, transcribed interviews, developed a detailed reading of the data, developed a coding process, defined categories and made an interpretation of the data. The observations of the classes were focused on the

teachers' actions and the teaching practices that they developed. Therefore, the field notes were mainly records of these teaching practices. For their codification, I employed knowledge categories discussed in Chapter Two, specifically Shulman's knowledge categories and Turner-Bisset's category knowledge of self, as the case study sought to explore the relationship between teachers' practices, knowledge and beliefs. Consequently, teaching practices were codified in terms of the type of knowledge that they appeared to involve. Examples of these codes are:

- content knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)
- general pedagogical knowledge
- curriculum knowledge
- knowledge of learners
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational ends

Additionally, some teaching practices were codified as a representation of a belief that the case study teacher had mentioned previously, such as a belief in repetition and a belief in self-correction. In developing an interactive analytical process and considering that codes represent original data in relation to researchers' theoretical concepts, I first linked instances of data. Then, I created a codebook with the codes that emerged through the process (Creswell, 2009), using coding as a means of data analysis (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Examples of some of the codes that came from the conversations with the participant teachers and from their journals are:

- propedeutic year influence
- description of an experience,
- general knowledge
- experience as a source of knowledge
- belief in drills

- description of practice,
- knowledge of a strategy
- belief in group work
- BA as a source of knowledge

After coding the data, I created categories. For the construction of categories, following Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I considered that they reflected the purpose of the research, that is to say, that the categories answered the research questions. Therefore, the main categories were knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices, and the subcategories covered the different types of knowledge, sources of knowledge and sources of beliefs. Moreover, the categories were sensitizing: category names revealed the meaning of the phenomenon and were conceptually congruent. That illustrated the fact that they were characterised by the same level of abstraction (Merriam, 1998). For example, some teachers' statements and actions were labelled as beliefs taking into consideration that, in this research, beliefs are considered evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable, stated or not because beliefs in the main must be inferred from what teachers say and do (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' definitions of concepts, such as meaningful learning and collaborative learning, were labelled as knowledge.

In addition, the categories were exhaustive. Therefore, all the relevant data to the study was categorised or subcategorised. The intention was for categories to be mutually exclusive, it is to say, a specific unit of data should only fit into one category. However, knowledge and beliefs are interlinked (Borg, 2003), and that aspect makes some data difficult to classify. Therefore, codifying some pieces of data as either knowledge or belief could be debatable. For instance, Keith's following statement could be subcategorised either as source of knowledge or as source of belief.

I took a course about the Rassias method. One of the activities they use a lot in the method is drills and repetitions... I have noticed that it really works, so I use repetitions most of the time (CS3-c2).

I decided to use the above statement to illustrate a source of belief taking into account that principles derived from a method are also found to be the origin of teachers' beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994 and Borg, 2003). Keith's following comment about his first experience in using drills and repetitions in a short English language course reinforced this decision.

It was a course of ten days. We were staying in Valle de Bravo... After those ten days, I noticed that they improved a lot (speaking in English). It was incredible (CS3-vi).

In order to interpret the constructed categories, I related them to specific concepts (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). For instance, as stated above, I subcategorised the knowledge category according to Shulman's classification (2004). I did so to explain the different types of knowledge that support language teaching practices. For example, I subcategorised teachers' representations and explanations of teaching contents as PCK, and teachers' ability to speak the English language as content knowledge. In relation to beliefs, I subcategorised statements such as teacher should be a guide, as a belief in the role of the teacher as a guide. See appendix 8 for a summary of the codification developed.

I brought all the information of the four participant teachers together and organised it into a case study database (Appendix 8) that helped me manage the data (Yin, 1994). In addition, I developed an analysis of each participant's data trying to establish relationships within it, within-case analysis, and identifying similarities and differences among the data of the four participants, cross-case analysis. Finally I constructed case studies of all the four participant teachers that illustrate the teachers' perspectives as well as my interpretations of the case.

Overall, for the collection of data to strengthen the construction of this case study, the principles *Use multiple sources of evidence, create a case study data base and maintain a chain of evidence* (Yin, 2003) were taken into consideration. I have attempted to maintain a chain of evidence through the case study questions — the protocol followed for obtaining the data in each situation which mainly consisted of issues to observe and indicative questions to ask — the case study data base — individual teachers' cases and the case study. In order to ensure the plausibility and reliability of the research findings, I developed four case studies simultaneously to conduct constant within-case analyses, as well as a cross-case analysis. I used a variety of data collection methods which not only helped to obtain rich data, but also to triangulate the information. Importantly, I also asked for peer examination of my interpretation of the data, with all four participants checking their individual 6000 to 7000 word case studies as a means of corroborating my interpretations. All the case study teachers agreed with the information presented in their cases and the general interpretations and few changes were made.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE CASES OF PAUL, PAM, KEITH AND KARLA

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CASES

This chapter presents a discussion of the four individual cases that have informed the development of what is also a wider case study of English language teaching. Due to the word limit of the present thesis, each individual case study draws on the longer case studies developed as a first stage to provide an overview of the main aspects of each case rather than providing each one in its entirety. Each case study centres on a discussion of the key teaching practices of the four case study teachers and on their knowledge and beliefs. Each one begins with the most frequently observed practices of the four teachers teaching English as a foreign language to university students from different BA programs within a foreign language program. Each case explores the relationship between the teachers' teaching practices and their knowledge and beliefs drawing on: a focus group interview; four cycles of observation of a class followed or preceded by a short conversation; three interviews with the participant teachers, one video-recorded class; three teacher's journals and two reflections as explained in Chapter Three. The observations were conducted in classes that had different focuses: grammar teaching; development of reading and writing; development of listening; development of speaking. The focus of the video-recorded class was chosen by each teacher independently. These classes are part of the English level two program that, at that moment in time, was composed of eight courses using the New American Inside Out (MacMillan).

The teaching practices were selected because the teachers applied them in all the classes observed and/or intensively and they could therefore be considered characteristic practices

of the language classes of the teachers in the study. These teaching practices are presented in the following table:

Paul	Pam	Keith	Karla
Intensive use of materials	Using information gap activities	Use of dynamic activities	Using students' personal information and local context
Repetition and drills	Using pair work and team work	Using pair and team work	Using pair and group Work
Using different interaction patterns	Working on skills learning process	Repetitions and drills	Communicative practice of grammar aspects
Expanding activities by offering extra information	Rewarding students	Encouraging students' self- correction	Eliciting

Table 4.1: The characteristic teaching practices of the case study teachers

The table shows that organising different interaction patterns is a practice employed by all four of the case study teachers whereas repetitions and drills are used by two. In the case of the other teaching practices presented in the table, most of them were employed by all four teachers, but they are not used so frequently as to be considered characteristic of what was observed in the teachers' classes. In each case study, the teachers' comments and explanations, given in the focus group, the pre and post lesson conversations and in their journals are used to explore the knowledge and beliefs that underpin these practices. Although specific categories of knowledge have been linked to specific teaching practices to offer evidence of the main knowledge category or categories that inform a given practice, the categories of knowledge are interconnected and support each other in actual teaching practice as noted by Johnston and Goettsch (2000).

4.2 THE CASE OF PAUL

Although the classes observed had different teaching focuses, the observations of Paul's classes showed that his most characteristic teaching practices were: (1) the intensive use of teaching resources, (2) repetition and drills, (3) the use of a variety of interaction patterns and (4) use of students' personal information. The planning of classes was also identified as an essential stage in Pauls' teaching work.

4.2.1 Discussion of Paul's characteristic teaching practices

Teaching practice 1: Intensive use of teaching resources

In all cases, it was observed that Paul supported his teaching with the use of different types of teaching resources: wall-charts, flash cards, hand outs, realia, authentic and semi authentic material as well as music. Paul used resources for the development the four skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing- as well as for the practice of grammar and pronunciation. He provided a visual context through wall charts, he motivated students by using realia and authentic material, and he constructed a language learning atmosphere by playing music in English while students were working. The use of realia and authentic material is encouraged by Communicative Language Teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001), and I noticed, in the observations of Pauls' classes that he tended to employ materials following a communicative approach, to have students practice the language within a given context and with a specific communication purpose. An example of Paul's use of material was noted in the fourth class observed where one and a half meter drawings of refrigerators that he designed were used by students to practice giving and asking for information about food using countable and uncountable nouns.

Different types of knowledge are required for the appropriate design and use of materials for language teaching. For example, pedagogical content knowledge involves knowledge of ways of representing and formulating the academic content for teaching to learners

(Shulman, 2004), and it could be said that Paul's pedagogical content knowledge was evidenced through the material he designed and used since it was observed that Paul's material illustrated the class topics and facilitated their understanding. It was Paul's knowledge about resources for language teaching that permitted him to design, adapt and use those materials. He said that he started developing this knowledge in his BA in ELT studies and through the development of the dissertation to obtain his BA degree.

For me material is something very important, I did my, my thesis... about materials (CS1-vi).

Paul's curriculum knowledge was also seen in his intensive use of teaching aids since it involves knowledge of materials and resources designed for the teaching of specific subjects (Shulman, 2004). Paul also explained:

I always try to include as many materials as possible. Whenever I don't use materials I feel like my students are not following my explanations (CS1-r2).

And:

It's important for me to guide the students through their process and whenever I don't use the materials, it's very hard for me. It's very hard for me to give a class with no materials. I can't imagine myself with no materials... for me material is something very important (CS1-vi).

Paul's explanations seem to illustrate his belief that materials are very important tools for his teaching practices. It shows that he considers that his explanations and the whole development of his class depend on the resources he brings to class. Therefore, Paul's belief in the essential role of resources in teaching and his reliance on them tend to inform

his practice. Teachers need to know their students to be able to adapt the activities and resources, to respond to their different needs, learning styles and learning strategies (Brown 2001; Harmer, 2001). Most of the resources that Paul used were according to his students' characteristics, however, there was some material that seemed to be for younger learners. For example, some wall charts that he used were designed for children. This aspect could be caused by a strong influence of his long teaching experience with children. In general, it can be argued, however, that Paul's teacher knowledge base supports him in the design and use of resources in language teaching practices.

Taking into consideration that personal preferences are also a source of teachers' beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994), Paul's personal preferences have probably been another aspect that has driven him in the design and exploitation of resources in his daily teaching practices.

I've always been a very creative person. I always like to create, to colour, to paint, to cut, fix, do, so mmm, at first, before I decided to be an English teacher I wanted to be something related to creation. For example, Architecture, Interior design... so in my mind was always that, and then my ideas got incorporated into teaching... Material is very important and you know me, and you know that material is something that I like to do (CS1-vi).

Furthermore, Paul's successful experiences in using resources might have confirmed his belief in the essential role of resources in teaching. As Borg (2003) and Senior (2006) note, successful teaching experiences are a source of teachers' beliefs.

When we started practising teaching, like in microteaching... my teachers were always saying 'oh that's a nice material' or 'very well'...Everybody seemed to like the materials, so I continued... it was motivating for me that others always took into consideration my materials to make or to reproduce their own examples of materials, for me is great that other teachers copy my materials (CS1-vi).

It could be argued that teachers start believing in certain teaching practices when they experience that they work and, as Guskey (2002) noted, subsequent successful experiences feed this belief.

All four participant teachers in the research used resources in their classes. However, the amount of resources that Paul was seen to employ and his way of displaying them all over the classroom indicated that resources play a central supporting role in his teaching practices. Paul was observed not only to contextualise language practice, but to involve students in the topic and motivate them to practice the language through the materials he brought to the class. It appears that Paul's belief in the essential role of resources in teaching and his successful experience in using resources, drive him to continue designing and utilising resources for the teaching of English since experience is an important source of knowledge (Wallace, 1991; Eraut, 2000) and beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

Teaching practice 2: Repetition and drills

Repetitions and drills are characteristic practices of the Audiolingual method and illustrate a behaviourist conception of language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In most of the classes observed, Paul had students do some repetition or a drill exercise. He also said in relation to repetition drills:

I use this technique every time I introduce new vocabulary... I use it in Elementary, Secondary and University classes and it seems to work fine with all of my groups (CS1-j2).

The classes observed showed that Paul also employed repetitions and drills for the teaching of vocabulary, grammar structures and the practice of pronunciation and reading in a choral or individual way. For example, Paul had students repeat words, sentences, short

paragraphs and dialogues. He reported in a teacher journal that he learnt about these techniques in a workshop in the USA. In a following conversation he explained the procedures of this technique:

It is a drill... you use it to present vocabulary or to substitute small fragments or sentences... It might seem simple, but it is not. First, you have to do two choral repetitions of the word. Then you start pointing to the student, you point, you take your hand back, and when you are looking at that student, then you snap and you point to another student who is like distracted or doing something, so you have to be aware of the students, and everything. And it's with practice and it is one of the Rassias techniques (CS1-c4).

It can be inferred that knowledge of the Rassias techniques became part of his pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 2004) later on. Paul declared himself to be a drill believer in the focus group interview and in the second conversation we had, he said that he has used Rassias techniques in previous semesters and that since they actually work, he really believes in them. The source of Paul's knowledge and belief appeared to be the workshop he took on Rassias techniques, and this belief has probably been reinforced by the positive experiences that he feels he has had when using these techniques (Guskey, 2002; Senior, 2006).

It seems that Paul's knowledge of, and strong belief in, repetition and drills drive him to use them. Nevertheless, there seems to be some contradiction between Paul's general communicative approach to language teaching and his application of drills and repetitions. This situation would exemplify, that in everyday practice, Paul, like many teachers, adopts a pragmatic approach (Senior, 2006). Moreover, these practices contradict his stated belief, in the focus group interview and in his second written reflection, that teaching and learning should be focused on communication.

... it's as you said being able to communicate ... what I think that what we meant that somebody knows English is because the person is able to transmit a message and get the point across...(CS1-fg)

Later on, Paul added:

It's something that I believe in, creating a real oh real situations in which they practice (CSI-fg)

The reason behind this contradiction might be the different types of beliefs that teachers hold since peripheral beliefs, those that are theoretically embraced, and core beliefs, those which are beliefs grounded in experience, are not held with the same degree of conviction (Phipps and Borg, 2009). I take this to mean that Paul's experientially engrained belief in drills is stronger than his belief that teaching practices should be focused on communication.

Teaching practice 3: Using different interaction patterns

Before the development of Communicative Language Teaching in the 1970's, the classical types of interaction in language classroom were between the teacher and the whole group or between the teacher and a student. Communicative Language Teaching encourages the use of pair and small group work in foreign language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In all the classes observed, it was seen that Paul encouraged students' interaction by having them work in pairs, small groups and teams, changing these interaction patterns constantly.

It's a long class five hours to be here sitting here, so to try to move them to pair them to group them, regroup them, to regroup them again...(CS1-c3).

While all four of the case study teachers were found to employ different interaction patterns in their English classes, the variety of interaction patterns that Paul organised characterised his teaching behaviour within the classroom. It seemed that Paul had previous knowledge of the role of the different interaction patterns in language teaching, however, he said that he became aware of its importance through his university teaching experience as he explained:

When I started working here at the university, I just put them (students) to work by themselves. I didn't group them... One day I talked with one of my friends and she used to have activities with different interaction patterns... So I started to realize that it would be better and more fun for them to work in pairs or in groups and changing the group arrangement, or even the sitting arrangement, so now I try to have them in a semi-circle...I separate them or when they're in pairs I move them, when they're in groups I separate the groups... or when we are outside we make a circle and then I switch them around... (CS1-vi).

Paul's management of the different interaction patterns suggests a range of knowledge categories (Shulman, 2004) including: content knowledge that permits him to give instructions correctly; general pedagogical knowledge that allows him to manage the group; knowledge of learners that helps him decide the integration of the pairs, groups and teams, and PCK that permits him to select the type of interaction that helps students understand the meanings involved by the different learning contents. This supports what Johnston and Goettsch (2000) say about how the different knowledge categories are interlinked in teaching practices.

Paul, in the interviews and in his journals, talked about some beliefs that could be reasons behind the variety of interaction patterns that he organised. For example, he said that students should interact not only with the teacher but also among themselves. Moreover, Paul's belief that knowing English means being able to communicate may be what has lead him to try a variety of interaction patterns to reach this purpose since teachers' actions in the classroom seems to be underpinned by beliefs about the nature of language (Nunan,

2004). This is to say, that Paul's teaching practices are also delineated by his belief about what knowing a language means to him.

Educationally based or research-based principles are another source of beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Paul had recently taken a course that emphasises the importance of group work; his knowledge on this kind of practice and his belief in having students interact in a variety of ways could have been strengthened.

I took a course, well they gave us a course in which they said that socialization, socialization is something that they are promoting and I try to include it I try to promote grouping, teaming and all of those things, it's something that I like (3rd interview).

Paul also explained:

(Changing interaction patterns) it's fun and it's rewarding because they enjoy it and they don't get bored because they are actually moving... it's something that I experienced and I would really recommend, work with interaction patterns, switching them, moving students, working inside (in the classroom), working outside (in the garden) (CS1-vi).

Teachers tend to trust in the strategies that work well for them and avoid those that have not been successful (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006). Therefore, Paul's positive experience in employing a diversity of interaction patterns may encourage him to continue with this practice. Overall, it could be argued that Paul seems to hold a variety of beliefs that encourage him to keep on finding ways of varying the interaction patterns that he organises in the English language class. Therefore, a single teaching practice can be considered to be the manifestation of different beliefs (Breen et al., 2001).

Teaching practice 4: Using students' personal information

In Communicative Language Teaching, language is equated with communication (Brown, 2001), and the purpose of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. Communicative competence is not only the ability to use language that is grammatically correct, but also appropriate to the context (Hymes, 1979). The use of students' personal information is encouraged by CLT since using meaningful and authentic language promotes language learning (Brown, 2001). Paul elicited and had students work using their personal information at some point in all of the classes observed. For example, in the second class observed, Paul had students to describe their houses and own bedrooms. Paul said that he studied these techniques in the BA in ELT:

It's important for them (students) to be put into real situations and... probably not physical but in their thoughts to relate them, and I know that it will be meaningful for them. So... if they do something that it would help them that will be meaningful for them and I learned that from here, from the BA (CS1-c1).

However, he underlined that he did not apply everything he learned in his BA studies nor everything he applied was learned in the BA:

Some things I copy from other teachers, some other things I have developed them over the years... I develop some techniques that I copy and I modify them, something that doesn't work or that is too boring for me, I would eliminate that or I would add something to the activity, but not everything that I learned here (in the university) I apply in my daily routines (CS1-vi).

Paul's teaching practice, eliciting and using students' information suggest his teacher knowledge base regarding content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners (Shulman, 2004). Paul's words illustrate the

different sources of his knowledge such as his BA in ELT studies, teaching practice and colleagues as well as its development. Paul's comment also seems to suggest teacher knowledge as a construction process which is consistent with the position taken in this research, i.e. that knowledge is not given or transmitted but constructed (Cohen et. al., 2007). Paul's words draw attention to the role of teaching experience in the construction of knowledge (Eraut, 2000).

Pauls' beliefs that a) English is learnt by making students use the language through simulating real situations and b) that students' main role in language classes is being active participants allowed to express their ideas plays an important role in his teaching practices. For example, all of the classes observed were mainly centred on students, and they practiced the language using their own information. Paul made it clear that he considered that it was important to give students the opportunity to practice learning topics with their real information because the practice would be more meaningful to them.

Because it (students' personal information) links the real information with the class... Because there is actually a connection between the topic of the class and what they actually see or have in their everyday life... if they are hooked with the information of their own, this would give me more time to get a better explanation and better understanding for them, and it would be more beneficial or how can I say it? It could be more... meaningful (CS1-vi).

Paul's knowledge of using students' information, regarding it as useful teaching techniques as well as his beliefs in the main roles of the teacher and students appear to be important reasons behind his teaching practices. Paul's beliefs that the purpose of teaching and learning a language is to be able to communicate, and that English is learnt when there is a need, may also be relevant reasons. These reasons would represent conceptions of language teaching and learning representative of CLT.

(The purpose of teaching English) It should be to help students to communicate in a real situation. To let students know that there is a real world in which English is essential (CS1-r2).

It could be argued that the same beliefs impel the employment of different teaching practices such as organising different interaction patterns, as discussed above, and using students' information. It seems that Paul's beliefs are rooted in his language learning experience since they mirror his experience as a language learner (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006; Pachler et al., 2007):

I learnt English because I really need it. Because I was living in a country, in which you need English to survive. So I learnt it because it was a necessity for me, so in my case I think that students must have a need ... if they want to learn, they need to have a need...you can create a need for them, I don't know, to get a job, you set a goal (CS1-fgi).

Furthermore, since "everything teachers do in the classroom is underpinned by beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of the learning process and the nature of the teaching act" (Nunan, 2004, p. 6), it could be argued that Paul's teaching practices, eliciting and using students' information are informed by his beliefs about what it means to know a language and about how learners become speakers of the foreign language. In addition, it could be said that Paul's teaching practices are also informed by his belief that learners become speakers when they feel the need to communicate, a belief that appears to illustrate learning as a construction of meaning through social interaction according to Sociocultural theory (Applefield et al., 2001).

4.2.2 Overview of the case of Paul

It could be said that Paul tended to approach the teaching of English as a foreign language by conducting well-planned and structured classes. He regarded lesson planning as

fundamental in his teaching of English. It was observed that he created a respectful, friendly, hard-working environment, where indoors and outdoors activities, developed with much material, took place. Paul seemed to aim to involve students and have them practice the language through the use of materials, organisation of a variety of interaction patterns and the use of students' information. The analysis of his classes, journals and interviews suggest that Paul's teacher knowledge base encompasses content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts (Shulman, 2004), and knowledge of the self (Turner-Bisset, 2001). Nevertheless, it is not easy to separate the different types of knowledge in teaching practice because a given knowledge category presupposes the others (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000; and Tsui, 2003).

Paul recognised that he developed the knowledge for some of his daily practices through his BA in ELT studies. However, he underlined that his teaching experience had played a central role in the development of his knowledge. Paul explained that he has become the type of teacher he is as a consequence of working with children, as they are very demanding and need monitoring all the time. Nevertheless, he also realised that his personal characteristics, "being very caring and being very picky all the time" (CS1-vi), have shaped his teaching. In addition, Paul asserted that his teaching was based on teachers he had on the BA and in High School, on peers and teachers that still worked with him in elementary school. Furthermore, Paul stated that he did not follow a specific methodology or certain techniques. He explained that he took a little bit from everywhere. He emphasised: "Maybe, I'm just a copycat" (CS1-vi).

It seems that Paul's beliefs, such as that the main teacher's role is to be a guide, that students should be active participants in language classes and that planning is essential, drive him to apply his characteristic teaching practices. The data suggests that the sources of his beliefs are successful teaching practice, ELT studies, learning experience and

personal characteristics. Pauls' beliefs linked to his personal learning preferences appeared to shape his general approach to teaching.

4.3 THE CASE OF PAM

As in the case of Paul, the observations made of Pam's classes showed the characteristic practices of her teaching of English as a foreign language to university students. Pam's most recurrent practices are: (1) using information gap activities, (2) organising pair and team work, (3) focusing in skills language development and (4) rewarding students. It was also observed that Pam wrote detailed lesson plans.

4.3.1 Discussion of Pam's characteristic teaching practices

Teaching practice 1: Information gap activities

Information gap activities, such as describing different pictures, are representative of the Communicative Language Teaching. They are designed to engage students in communication and to have them exchange information (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Larsen and Freeman, 2000). In all of the observed classes, it was identified that Pam employed information gap activities. She developed this type of activity for different purposes, such as having students practice and review different grammar structures and language functions.

For the speaking one I have this, they have to describe and find differences in two pictures... and I have this one also, where students will have different pictures, and they also have to compare the pictures by describing them (CS2-c1).

Pam said that she became aware of this type of activity through the textbooks she followed when teaching English at the university. She explained that the teacher's book included tips

and advice on using different activities, and that it had a resource pack in which information gap activities are the most common ones. Thus, it could be argued that the teacher transformed the information obtained on this type of activities into knowledge through planning and teaching her university English classes. It appears that Pam's teacher knowledge base has been strengthened by her teaching practice since the selection, organisation and development of information gap activities indicate the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge as well as her general pedagogical knowledge. General pedagogical knowledge includes aspects such as organization of learning, maximizing resources and time and encouraging participation (Tsui, 2003).

A real exchange of information between students and that students were busily working to do the task were observed when Pam conducted information gap activities. Pam said that she regarded information gap activities as important because they promoted meaningful learning, which makes the language learning process easier for students. She also stated that she used this type of activity because they did not only involve words, but they gave meaning to what students ask or say. Pam explained that she developed this kind of belief through her teaching practice since she noticed that when activities involved information students needed to use and exchange, they remembered it, and which she felt made practicing with it easier.

Pam's pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners (Shulman, 2004) also seemed to support her application of information gap activities since it was observed that Pam selected them according to students' characteristics. In addition, the belief she has developed in this type of activity through successful teaching experiences appears to have encouraged her to continue using them (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006). While Pam's belief that the purpose of learning English should be that students can express themselves and communicate with others in the second language may strengthen her application of information gap activities, in the case of Paul, eliciting and using students' information are the teaching practices that are impelled by this shared belief.

Teaching practice 2: Pair work and team work

Like Paul, in all the classes observed, Pam organised different interaction patterns, privileging working in pairs or teams over individual work. She stated that these interactions patterns were her favourite type of interactions:

I think that my favourite interaction would be teamwork. I always put them in teams, and I try them to be in different teams every time because I want them to have like a good relationship with all of their classmates in the classroom ... the second one is pair work, and I usually try to put a high level student with a lower level student, so the higher one can teach the lower student so he can receive knowledge not only from me as a teacher (CS2-bi).

Pam's words suggested an interactional view of language in which, language was "a tool for the creation and maintenance of relations" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.21). She also explained that she usually moved students because she wanted that all the students had contact with a different classmate at least once. In addition, Pam explained that she learned about collaborative learning in her BA in ELT studies and through the development of her BA dissertation. Collaborative learning is regarded as an "extension of the principles of Communicative language teaching" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 193) and suggests a social constructivist conception of language learning that regards learning as a collaborative construction of meaning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

I did the thesis of my BA on collaborative learning and... I had one subject. I don't remember exactly which one, that talked ... one of topics was collaborative learning, and how students can learn from other students, and how if you as a teacher organise the students always a higher level student with a lower level student, they... at the end of the course, they can be almost at the same level, so that's why I'm interested in collaborative learning (CS2- c2).

Pam's comment suggests that, besides knowing about collaborative learning, she is aware of the Mediation and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concepts of Sociocultural theory (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Thus, she encourages language learning by having students work with more competent peers. It could be argued that Pam's knowledge about collaborative learning is part of her pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge and it informs her teaching practice of using pair and team-work. Pam stated her belief on the advantages of having students work in pairs or teams.

I also believe that when students work together is also a benefit for them because they can learn from someone else's experience and/or mistakes. There's an author that says that collaborative learning in which learners depend and are accountable to each other, so in this way the teacher would not be the only one who provides everything, but also some other students can facilitate knowledge (CS2-j1).

Pam's comment illustrates her knowledge of collaborative learning in which responsibility and accountability for each other are two of its principles (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Moreover, her words suggest her belief in the social construction of knowledge by interacting not only with the teacher but also with a peer (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

I've always believed in working in teams as a good way of collaborative learning. Working together can, in my opinion, increase learning (CS2-r1).

It seems that Pam's knowledge of and beliefs about collaborative learning as well as her belief that the "students' roles should be as learners and collaborators that together can construct the knowledge to be able to communicate in English" (CS2-r2) encouraged her to have students work in pairs or in teams in all of the classes observed. She therefore incorporated collaborative learning into her communicative approach to language teaching. Moreover, Pam's general pedagogical knowledge and her knowledge of students support

her in the organisation and monitoring of the interaction patterns required by collaborative learning.

Both Pam and Paul organised their classes employing pair and teamwork. They both also considered that knowing English means being able to communicate in this language. Nevertheless, they offered distinct rationales for this teaching practice. For example, Paul considered that promoting students' socialisation in the language classroom was important; whereas Pam's belief in collaborative learning appeared to be her reasons behind this practice. Therefore, it could be said that the same teaching practice was motivated by different reasons.

Teaching practice 3: Working on the development of skills processes

Communicative Language teaching, besides aiming to develop communicative competence, is considered to be:

An approach that aims to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledges the interdependence of language and communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 155).

It was observed in three of Pam's classes how carefully she guided students through language skills development processes. For example, on the second class observed, I noted how Pam guided students first, to identify unknown words, then to infer their meaning through context, and then to identify the main ideas of the paragraphs, finally to get specific information. Pam conscientiously led students step by step through reading and listening comprehension processes. She did not only have students employ different reading and listening strategies but she also provided students with examples of the application of these strategies.

Sometimes they (students) think they read, but they don't really get the idea of what they are reading, that's why I try to have different stages through the reading... maybe they, first identify the words they don't know, then look at the paragraphs, the structure of the readings... And at the end they come up with the idea, what the reading is about, what the author or the writer is trying to say... (CS2-c3).

Pam added that by having students develop language skills processes, they did not just read or listen to words but they understood what they were reading or listening to as noted in the second and third classes observed. Pam said that she had learnt how to guide students through skills development processes in her BA in ELT studies. First, she experienced these processes as language learner in the first semesters of the BA, and then she was taught how to use different strategies in the teaching of language skills.

I learnt them mainly in the major when I was in 'Propedeutico' (a preparatory year focused on English learning)... I had a subject that was reading... they taught us to identify main ideas, to guess the meaning words from other words in the reading... and then in the major, when we had the teaching subjects, they taught us some skills and strategies that can be applied in those skills. I think that the subject was 'Estrategias de Enseñanza' (Teaching strategies) (CS2-c2).

One of the sources of teachers' beliefs is teachers own experience as language learners when teachers' beliefs about teaching mirror their experience as language learners (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). Pam said that she developed her content knowledge during her university studies as she learned English in the propedeutic year of the BA in ELT. In the teaching of English as a foreign language, this type of knowledge includes knowledge about English, as well as the teacher's English proficiency (Randall and Thornton, 2001).

Pam regarded focusing on skills processes as important because it was a way of making students aware of the fact that every activity they did had a purpose as well as a way for them to realise that they were learning.

I want them to be clear that each activity has like a purpose... and for me the process... it makes me know or be sure that they understand... Ah, in that way we can move together and move on to the next stage or the next activity. If I see they didn't get the first thing, for me is a sign that I can't move, so that's why I have the process... even though if it's a normal simple activity, it needs to have a process... Also, the process... it's like a way they can realize, at least that's what I believe, that they are learning (CS2-vi).

For Pam, it is also a way of being sure that students understand, and knowing if she can move on the next stage or not, as the above statement illustrates. It could be said that the way Pam approaches the teaching of language skills is supported by her content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 2004). Moreover, her knowledge of the exams that students have to take, which is part of her curriculum knowledge (Shulman, 2004), also drives her to pay attention to the practice of language skills. For example, Pam explained that she selected a listening activity because of the following:

In the exam they (students) have a listening section where they have to answer comprehension questions. They need to look for listening for specific information... to listen and identify some things in the conversation...what the speakers are referring to, that's why I choose the listening from the workbook" (CS2-c4).

Additionally, Pam's decision to work on language skills process seems to be based on various beliefs that Pam expressed. For example, she stated that language learning was the result of a process and that teachers' main role was that of facilitator.

I think it (teacher's role) would be first like the facilitator, teacher should facilitate students learning... students then need to discover, and I am here just to help them understand" (CS2-bi).

Pam's words illustrate again, a belief in language learning as a collaborative construction of meaning. It could be argued that Pam's work on the development of language skills is an example of how teachers mediate students' learning through the ZPD. Teachers mediate students' learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Pam acknowledged that she did not really know if her way of proceeding, going gradually was developed through her BA studies or if it was her natural way of doing things.

I have two theories, one is that I learned it here in the BA in ELT in my classes here in the university, the other theory is that it is my natural way of doing things... something I developed unconsciously by working... it's like my own personality, I'm gonna do this first, then this... (CS2-vi).

Pam's approach to the teaching of reading and listening skills is a characteristic of her teaching practice. Her beliefs and personal preferences as a learner appear to lead Pam in her way of guiding students through the language skills development processes.

Teaching practice 4: Rewarding students

Behaviourism regards learning as a habit formation, in which stimulus, response and reinforcement are key aspects to obtain the appropriate behaviour. Rewarding students is a way of behaviour reinforcement that increases the possibility that a specific behaviour becomes a habit (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The Audiolingual method, as explained in Chapter Two, is based on the behaviourist theory, in which "foreign language learning is basically a mechanical habit formation" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 57). I observed though Pam's classes, that she gave different types of rewards to students, for example, she usually asked students to applaud classmates' performance. I also observed that she gave some candy to students and an extra point to be considered in their midterm evaluation.

Every time that we do a review, in this case the day of the exam, I give them a green sticker. It's an extra point in the speaking exam where they can get like a backup if they are nervous or forget what they have to say (CS2-c4).

It seemed that Pam became aware of this type of practice through her teaching experience as she said that a teacher had advised her to give students extra points for specific parts of their evaluations during reviews. She also commented that a colleague told her about the benefits of having candy before exams:

I remember one teacher suggested me that in the reviews we can give points for a specific kind of evaluation, this time it was in the speaking one. That is why I do it. The candy, because I heard from one of my colleagues, I don't remember if she was a psychologist or something like that, that when they eat candy before an exam, something happens with their brains... they activate their brains (CS2-c4).

Pam thought that giving students extra points or some candy as a reward was a way of encouraging them to work harder and participate in class as her following statements illustrates:

I think it is like encouragement for them, so they can look for something in the activity, not just doing the activity because they have to, but they can win something... that's why I did it (CS2-c4).

Moreover, since Pam considers encouraging students to continue working important and regards their participation as vital for the development of the class, she uses different strategies for these purposes such as giving them extra points. It could be argued that teaching undergraduate students who study English as a university requirement and who are therefore sometimes not very motivated to learn the language, has led her to search for ways of encouraging students work. It can also be said that Pam gives students specific

things as a reward because she has found this strategy successful. For example, I observed students working faster to win an extra point for their oral exam. The positive reaction from her students towards this action has motivated Pam to continue taking advantage of it (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006). Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency between Pam's general approach to language teaching, her belief that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and this last reinforcement practice of giving students specific rewards. This last practice could represent a conflict since Pam's teaching practices and her stated and inferred beliefs tend to suggest a social constructivist stance as a language teacher.

4.3.2 Overview of the case of Pam

It can be said that Pam, in general, tended to approach teaching methodically and systematically. She undertook processes gradually. The observations done of her classes illustrated that she developed well-planned classes where openings and closings of activities as well as the checking of instructions seemed to be fixed patterns in her teaching. Pam created an encouraging working environment where students seemed disposed to participate. She appeared to be interested in achieving the involvement of students through the language learning activities that she planned, differently from the other case study teachers. For example, materials and movement helped Paul to involve students, Keith employed dynamics for students' involvement, and Karla used students' personal information for this purpose. Although Pam shared some common teaching practices with Paul, they stated different motives for their actions. For example, both of them played music while students worked, Paul based his decision on a positive learning experience since he considered that listening to music would help him concentrate when studying, whereas, Pam played music to support the learning of those students with musical intelligence (Garner, 1993b) as well as a means of creating a comfortable working environment.

The focus of Pam's classes varied. She focused on skills process, guiding students' work on the development of language skills. She centred her classes on product to make students master specific grammar structures and functions. Pam also centred her teaching on students when she directed her teaching to respond to her students' needs, as well as to encourage their independent work. Pam's teacher knowledge seemed to be composed of a range of interlinked knowledge categories (Shulman, 2004) including: subject knowledge, which is the means and object of her classes. Pam's classes as in the case of Paul's classes were conducted in English. Spanish was seldom used. Pam's pedagogical content knowledge allowed her to identify forms of representation and manners to help students understand the different aspects that the learning of English implies. Her pedagogical knowledge supported Pam in organising and managing teaching resources as well as the group. She encouraged students' participation and involved all of them in the class work. Her knowledge of learners and curriculum knowledge helped her in the selection and adaptation of materials and activities to respond to students' wants and needs as well as to reach the objectives of the program.

Pam's teaching practices also appeared to be informed by the different beliefs that she appeared to hold, such as that: a) English is learnt by using and practicing it, b) learners and collaborators are the main students' roles whereas the teacher's main role should be to be a facilitator, c) collaborative learning is significant in language teaching, d) the purpose of English learning is being able to communicate and e) knowing English means being able to socialise. These beliefs seem to be rooted in her teaching experience, her BA in ELT studies and her preferences as a learner. It could be argued that they developed from her personal learning preferences and that they delineate her general approach to her classes. They suggest that Pam holds a social constructivist stance as a language teacher.

4.4 THE CASE OF KEITH

The observations made of Keith's classes illustrated that his most recurrent practices were: (1) Organising dynamic activities, (2) using pair and team work, (3) repetitions and drills and (4) encouraging students' self-correction.

4.4.1 Discussion of Keith's characteristic teaching practices

Teaching practice 1: Use of dynamic activities

In all of the classes observed, Keith organised different dynamic activities such as games and contests to help students to learn different language aspects. For example, in the fourth class observed, he had students practice English grammar –present continuous tense– through a picture guessing game. Keith explained that he employs activities that he has learnt in the updating workshops he has attended and that he also copies and adapts activities that other teachers apply. He also designs his own activities based on the games he used to play as a child and as a teenager as his following comment shows:

I copy, I adapt dynamics that I have seen in courses, workshops or that other teachers use. I also use games I played when I was a kid. They like to... and I also like these activities, not being sitting all the time (CS3- fi).

To manage the class, Keith used different strategies such as having students play counting and clapping to be chosen to ask or answer specific questions. Furthermore, in all of the classes observed, he had students follow the format of spelling contests when he asked them to spell any word.

I started asking students to spell words following a spell contest... because it was something they do in schools in United States and since they like it, I

continue asking them to do it, so... Here, in the university, they seem to like it too (CS3- fi).

The activities employed by Keith included some representative of the Audiolingual Method to practice grammar structures, as well as activities encouraged by CLT in the practice of language functions. For example, he conducted some contests and games for grammatical pattern practice that would be a different way of conducting drill practice, a practice extensively used by Audiolingualism (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Keith also had students play games in which they had to exchange information. CLT encourages activities that involve an information gap in order for students to focus on language meaning rather than on language form (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The type of dynamic activities that Keith designs and adapts suggests Keith's PCK. The organisation and development of these teaching dynamics also suggest his content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and his knowledge of learners. Moreover, it seems that employing this type of activity for the teaching of English is the way Keith has found to act upon his beliefs. He believes that students should be active participants, that dynamic activities involve them and make them participate. Keith's beliefs about teaching and learners seem to play a significant role in his actual teaching practices. This supports what Hativa (2002) says about the important role of teachers' beliefs in their practices.

For me (teaching) it's not like teaching, teaching like I remember teaching from the University like I was sitting listening to a guy talking about subjects and all that stuff... I mean I really enjoy it and it's having fun for me (CS3-fgi).

When interviewed, Keith highlighted that teaching was not only transmitting information, but also having fun. He said that he enjoyed English teaching and that he preferred to teach

English through dynamic activities. These beliefs appeared to have their source in Keith's own preferences as a learner in that he underlined that he felt that he had not given a good class when he did not incorporate a dynamic activity in his teaching.

Teaching practice 2: Pair and team work

In common with Paul and Pam, in all of the classes observed and also in the class that was recorded, Keith set activities to be developed in pairs or in teams. He had students work in pairs or teams for grammatical or communicative practice as well as for oral or written work. Pair work, small group work and team work are interactions patterns encouraged by the CLT as stated above (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). This type of activity suggests Keith's content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of learners (Shulman, 2004) that allow him to set and manage pair and teamwork. He also has the PCK that permits teachers to understand the importance of interactions and to select the type of interaction to promote language learning. For example, in the fourth class observed Keith had students work in trios to practice descriptions. Beliefs Keith discussed may also be relevant to his application of pair and teamwork teaching practice. For instance, he considers that these types of interactions are important in order for students to get to know each other. He also believes that when students know each other, they feel more confident in using and practicing the foreign language.

What I really like to do is working in teams or in pairs because I think it's a real learning of a language... and to learn is to practice and to interact, so for me is essential to work in pairs or in groups... even when they are doing a writing activity... I always give them the chance to compare, to share (CS3-bi).

Keith's belief that learning takes place by practising and interacting may be what lead him to organise pair and team work in all of the classes observed. His words suggest that for Keith knowledge is constructed through interaction, because he underlines that he has students work in pairs even in a writing activity, as observed. In addition, beliefs that

appear to have their origins in Keith's personal learning preferences may also play a role in his decision of organising pair and teamwork in his classes.

When I was a student, I used to think on what kind of teacher I wanted to be. I mean... I really wanted to have a teacher who moved all the time... like a very active teacher... so that's why I try to be like that, to do that (CS3-c1).

Overall, it could be argued that Keith's preferences as a learner impel him to utilise pair and team work for the teaching of English since teachers' personal preferences may have a more predominant role than their methodology (Bailey et al., 2001, cited in Borg, 2003), defined as the teaching approaches, activities, materials and procedures teachers use (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Likewise, it could be said that Keith's teacher knowledge, which is composed of intertwined categories of knowledge, has helped him take advantage of pair and teamwork for his daily language teaching practice.

Teaching practice 3: Repetitions and drills

The Audiolingual method, since it is based on a behaviourist view of language learning makes use of repetitive practice intensively (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Keith, as in the case of Paul, conducted repetitions in most of the classes observed. He had students repeat words and chunks of language to practice vocabulary, grammar structures and even some language functions at different stages of the class. As already discussed, Keith, like Paul, took a workshop on Rassias techniques in which repetitions and drills were the main teaching techniques practised and in the focus group interview, Keith joined Paul in stating that he was a believer in drills.

I took a course about the Rassias method. One of the activities they use a lot in the method is drills and repetitions... I have noticed that it really works, so I use repetitions most of the time (CS3-c2).

Principles derived from a method have been found to be a source of teachers' beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Borg, 2003 and Senior, 2006) and teachers may be convinced that a specific teaching method is highly effective as Keith's comment above illustrates. In addition, in the second interview, Keith said that he was chosen to give an English course using these techniques to Mexican teachers whose level of English was very poor.

It was a course of ten days. We were staying in Valle de Bravo... After those ten days, I noticed that they improved a lot, it was incredible because I was working with teachers from Chiapas and some of them didn't know English and when they left they were speaking English (CS3-vi).

Thus, it seems that Keith's successful teaching experience, in addition to his learning experience with the Rassias method were the source of his belief on repetitions.

I had a class in French using this technique. I don't know French, nothing, not even a word... I had just one class, and I really liked it, I enjoyed it and it was with a lot of motivation... a very dynamic class so I said I want to be like that teacher (CS3-vi).

It appears that Rassias techniques also appeal to Keith's lively personality, reinforcing his belief in them. Additionally, Keith's content knowledge helps him offer students models of pronunciation and intonation. His pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of learners enable him to involve all the students when employing this practice. Moreover, his pedagogical content knowledge seems to include knowledge of the Rassias techniques. Nevertheless, as in the case of Paul, there seems to be some inconsistency between the use of drills and repetitions and their stated belief that language teaching should be focused on communication, since repetitions and drills suggest a structural view of language whereas a focus on communication shows a functional perspective of language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Teaching practice 4: Encouraging students self-correction

In Communicative Language Teaching and from a social constructivist conception, language is constructed through interaction. From this conception, teachers' mediation, helping students notice their errors and encouraging them to correct themselves, would be central for language learning. CLT encourages self-correction and peer correction from students (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) and errors are considered evidence of their language learning. In most of the classes observed, Keith promoted students' self-correction and he had students correct their own pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors. He also had students check their own answers in the different exercises he assigned. For example, in listening activities, he asked students to listen again and check their answers. He also asked students to compare their answers in written exercises frequently. Keith is aware of his knowledge about self-correction as his following words illustrate:

Reflecting about the reason for using this activity, I realised that I had the theoretical knowledge about the importance of error correction (CS3-j1).

Keith explained the reasons behind his belief in students' self-correction as follows:

I believe in self- correction, I think if students correct themselves and they themselves notice their mistakes, that's going to make them learn more and easier (CS3-c1).

Keith also explained that he believed in self-correction because students' learning increased when they identified their own mistakes. Keith considered himself to have learned about self-correction in his BA in ELT studies. However, he developed a belief in this technique through his teaching experience:

(Knowledge on self-correction) It's part of the major, but I think that it's more related to practice, I have seen that... when they correct themselves or a peer corrects them, it is even more important for them that if I do it (CS3-c1).

In a second interview on this issue, Keith added:

I totally believe in error correction, but that's because I learned that in the major, so I think that in the major I got it like the theoretical part and since I have noticed it works and, it's very important, I truly believe in that (CS3-c2).

Keith's words also suggest that knowledge has been internalised and become a belief established through successful practice (Breen et al., 2001). Furthermore, Keith explained that as a BA in ELT student, he was asked to create a teaching method. He said that in his proposal, he decided to start from a small unit, a word, and to construct language by putting that word into a structure adding more words, that is to say, by following a bottom- up approach.

When I was studying, I had the chance to create a method, which I would like to follow. What I decided to do was to start working with vocabulary since the beginning, you know isolated words, and then start adding eh... structures to those words. Actually, in the video you are gonna see that part. I started working with isolated words, and then I took those words into a context or into a structure (CS3-vi).

The observations of his classes suggested that Keith follows a bottom- up approach when introducing grammar structures or working with pronunciation since this approach starts from words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings to a final message as Brown (2001) noted. Nevertheless, when Keith worked on the development of the listening and reading language skills, he developed a general to specific teaching process following a top-down approach. This approach begins with global understanding and with the general

interpretation of a text as Brown (2001) also noted. This manner of approaching the teaching of language skills may be informed by Keith's learning preference.

I like to learn... I like to see the general topic first and then you know stop in specific aspects about this, then about that, so that's the way I learnt. May be because of that, you know, we teach in the way we learnt, I think (CS3-c3).

Keith's words illustrate how his way of teaching has been informed by his way of learning. Therefore, it could be argued that his approach to the teaching of the language skills is supported by his experiential knowledge (Wallace, 1991) and impelled by his core beliefs –beliefs grounded in experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

4.4.2 Overview of the case of Keith

Through the observations of Keith's classes, it was identified that he developed dynamic classes mainly centred on students. Being a guide was his main role as a teacher. Keith created a relaxed, dynamic working environment that involved students, encouraging their participation in the different stages of the class. The observations and interviews carried out with Keith as well as his teacher journals suggested that Keith's teacher knowledge base was composed of interwoven categories of knowledge (Shulman, 2004) including: subject content knowledge that permitted him not only to speak in English, but also to explain how it was structured and used to communicate. Keith also possessed pedagogical content knowledge that enabled him to identify ways of making language knowledge accessible to students. That he also had pedagogical knowledge that was evidenced by his classroom management. His knowledge of learners and knowledge of learning contexts enabled him to adapt his teaching activities to the different students' profiles that he had. Keith acknowledged that the source of much of his knowledge was the BA in ELT he studied, however, he emphasised that he considered actual teaching as the real source of his learning.

I learnt a lot of things here in the major, but I think that when I start learning was when I started teaching... so practicing, and you know, facing troubles everyday with the students (CS3-vi).

Keith's frequent teaching practices appeared to have been informed by his beliefs such as that: (a) communication should be the purpose of learning and teaching a language; (b) language learning is achieved by practicing it and interacting in the language; (c) the main teachers' role in language teaching is to be a guide, and (d) teaching is having fun. Moreover, it could be argued that the sources of Keith's beliefs are his personal learning preferences, learning experience and teaching experience.

Keith shares some teaching practices with Paul and Pam. Keith, like Paul, conducted a lot of repetitions and drills. Both of them also stated a belief in the value of drills. The source of the belief and knowledge to employ this technique in the teaching of English was the workshop they both took on Rassias techniques in the USA. Their belief had probably been reinforced by the successful experiences that both of them reported having had when using these techniques. It could be thought that Paul and Keith conducted very similar classes because of the teaching practices and beliefs that they share. Nevertheless, they also appeared to hold different beliefs about teaching because of the manner they approached it. Paul explained:

I try to, to speak with them with respect, to have them respect me, to have them respect others, because it's something that I see every day in my classroom with kids, and with teenagers... if you don't set the rules, they easily go on, so this is something that I take from that, and I bring it here and it helps, and I think that it's a good thing I do (CS1-c4).

Paul added:

A very important action? To set limits, ok, because by establishing limits that's something that is important, and I learned that...because since the students know the rules, they know like, this is allowed, this is not allowed, what they can do, what's going to be the results of the action if they do something wrong or if they do something good (CS1-bi).

Paul's explanations help us understand his ordered and organised approach to his classes since he considers creating a respectful atmosphere with clear rules important. From a different perspective, Keith commented:

I really enjoy it (Teaching), and it's having fun for me (CS3-fgi).

He added:

When I was studying I was thinking what kind of teacher I wanted to be? I mean... I really wanted to have a teacher like eh... moving all the time, and making jokes, like a very active teacher so that's why I try doing like that (CS3-c1)

From Keith's comments, some reasons behind his energetic and relaxed approach to his classes could be inferred. For him, teaching was movement and having fun. Consequently, in spite of the fact that Keith and Paul share some teaching practices, their classes differed significantly. Paul tended to organise and control every step of the activities he conducted while Keith's approach to teaching was more relaxed. The organisation and development of activities in Keith's classes seemed to depend on the teacher as well as on the students. In addition, it could be said that Paul's classes were in general focused on communication whereas, in Keith's classes, practices of language structures and language functions were both emphasised.

Keith as in the cases of Pam and Paul organised a variety of interaction patterns: pair, group and teamwork. The three teachers regarded interaction among students as significant for language learning. However, they also stated different specific beliefs as reasons behind this teaching practice. For example, Paul talked about the importance of students' socialisation, Pam stated the central role of collaborative learning in language teaching while Keith underlined that pair and teamwork encourages a real learning of the language. Therefore, the same teaching practice was impelled by different beliefs.

4.5 THE CASE OF KARLA

As in the cases of Paul, Pam and Keith, the observations conducted of Karla's classes illustrated her most characteristic teaching practices. These practices were: (1) using students' information, (2) organising individual, pair and teamwork, (3) the communicative practice of grammar and (4) eliciting.

4.5.1 Discussion of Karla's characteristic teaching practices

Teaching practice 1: Using students' information

In CLT, it is recognised that "language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process" and contextualisation is therefore considered to be essential in CLT (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 156). Consequently, using students' information would be a teaching practice encouraged by CLT. In addition, the role of teachers as mediators between spontaneous (everyday) and scientific (academic) concepts is central in foreign language teaching (Robbins, 2003). It was observed that Karla used students' information about themselves: their class, the university, the city and Mexico to explain language aspects and also to have students practice them. For example, she used students' likes about food to teach vocabulary. She also had students use their knowledge of the university to write descriptions. In the class video recorded, Karla took advantage of the students'

knowledge of the city to explain comparatives and to have students practise making comparisons.

Teachers' knowledge of learners and pedagogical content knowledge was illustrated by how Karla took advantage of students' information to make language meaning accessible to students and foster the learning of English. In addition, Karla's beliefs in meaningful activities and teaching the foreign language using students' context may have a role in her recurrent practice of using students' information.

In the master's degree, I learnt that learning must be meaningful, and it is something that I really care about (CS4-vi).

Karla explained that something attractive to students, something that they could apply, represented meaningful learning because students needed to be interested in what they were doing to be able to learn. She also stated:

It's because as I told you before eh... if learning is not meaningful for them they don't learn, if they don't see like... ok it's important for me, or I'm interested in... they won't really pay attention (CS4-c4).

Breen et al. (2001) argue that pedagogical principles are created from beliefs. Therefore, the principle of encouraging meaningful learning may emerge from the teacher's belief that students learn what they are interested in. Moreover, Karla said that she regarded getting students' attention as fundamental in the teaching of English.

I tried to prepare different things to get their attention 'cause the idea is to get the students attention in order to work better... I know it is important 'cause I

was a student and when a class didn't get my attention I didn't really work well, and when a teacher really called my attention I really liked it, I produced (CS4-c3).

Karla's learning experience appears to be the source of her belief in teaching English using students' information (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). Moreover, in a later interview, she also explained:

It's something that I learnt through my experience. Students, they like to use something that they physically know, so actually if you check in the video their answers were like 'yes, yes, this and that' and their participation increased because it was something they know, like tacos, La Purisima (a popular place). They know it, they can really apply it, and so in this way they could see: 'ok, I know la Purisima, I've been in la Purisima, I have eaten tacos' so it is something like I can apply in a real context, 'cause the real context is here in Mexico, not outside (CS4-vi).

Therefore, it could be argued that Karla's belief in using students' information was strengthened by her teaching experience (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). Overall, it appears that Karla's content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners and their contexts enable her not only to use students' information to practice specific language items but that it also supports her in contextualising language teaching. In this manner, English learning is facilitated. Moreover, her belief in meaningful learning, that this learning can be fostered by conducting attractive activities based on contents students are interested in, may be a reason for her common teaching practice of using students' information since teachers' pedagogic principles are enacted through a set of practices. Principles and practices influence each other in teachers' daily work. Thus, the relationship between them is interactive (Breen et al., 2001). Since pedagogical principles are created from beliefs, beliefs and teaching practices inform each other.

Teaching Practice 2: Using individual, pair and team work

As noted in the classes observed, Karla worked with the whole group and had students work individually in the first stages of the class, and then she organised a pair or team activity as the last stage in most of the classes. She worked with the group as whole and had students work individually for the practice of grammar structures and reading and listening skills. For the communicative practice of grammar, such as having students produce dialogues, descriptions and comparisons, in all of the classes observed, Karla organised pair or teamwork, which are interaction patterns representative of CLT (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Karla explained that she started practicing with different interaction patterns and learnt about their importance during her BA in ELT studies. Nonetheless, she acknowledged becoming aware of their application through her actual teaching experience.

When I was here in the BA, I started practising different interaction patterns. Then, when I became a teacher, I got like very conscious about it (using different interaction patterns), and said “This topic is perfect to work individually. This is ideal for small groups or pairs”. So I think through experience, I mean I learnt in the major how important it was, but I really became aware of that when I was like in action (CS4-vi).

Karla said that she believed that knowing a language is being able to interact in the language. She also said that all of the interaction patterns should be applied in English language teaching as the following comment illustrates:

All of them 'cause different skills, different activities need different patterns so we need to interact in several ways. I like warming with a class-work. I like group work 'cause they can share. Speaking is more appropriate to work in teams or in pairs. Sometimes for difficult readings or writing, they can help each other... I think ah... all the interaction patterns must be used in a class (CS4-c4).

It could be stated that Karla's belief that knowing a language is being able to interact in the language may lead her to have students interact by pair and teamwork. Additionally, Karla's content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 2004) support her in the organisation and application of different interaction patterns. However, the observations of Karla's classes illustrated that when working in pairs or teams, students tended to work with the same classmates most of the time because they tended to choose the same seats every class.

Teaching practice 3: Eliciting

Students' role as active participants is encouraged by CLT (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Eliciting would therefore be a way of encouraging students to contribute to their learning in class. It was observed that Karla encouraged students' participation by eliciting information from students in all her classes. She elicited different kind of information and for different purposes. For example, in the first class observed, she elicited grammar structures and examples to review them, and in the second class observed, she elicited students' personal information to introduce a topic. She also elicited information through realia and visual aids to model activities such as describing people and comparing places. Moreover, Karla had students correct their classmates' work on the board. Karla explained that she experienced how the teacher elicited from students when she was in the propedeutic year of the BA in ELT. However, she stated that she developed the eliciting technique through her teaching experience:

I developed it (eliciting) through my experience with big groups... with big groups, I could see that it was good because I don't have time to go one by one and check all of them, so I think it's like a faster way to do it (CS4-vi).

Karla's beliefs in the roles of students as active participants and responsible of their learning and in the teacher's role as a facilitator, may be inferred from her following statements:

I think we need to provide them just with the necessary things but not to solve all the things for them. Because they need to think, they need to apply it, otherwise it's useless that they take the English class because the teacher is going to do everything (CS4-bi).

And:

Because it (eliciting the correction from students) is, like them to be more conscious about it. Well, the idea is that I model in the warm up, now we're doing the activity, we're practicing, one of your classmates did a mistake, help me to correct him 'cause maybe they have the same problem and they were like very aware of the mistake and the rule (CS4-vi).

These beliefs could be the reason behind Karla's eliciting practice. Moreover, Karla's elicitation seems to be strengthened by her belief that language classes should be centred on students:

I think it (eliciting the correction from students) is useful because, as I told you, I can do the correction, but somehow the class will become like focused on the teacher rather than on students, and then the ideal is to be focused on students (CS4-vi).

Karla's content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge appeared to be a significant support for enabling her to elicit as much as she was observed to do. Nevertheless, in relation to her general pedagogical knowledge, Karla, when eliciting, allowed free participation without nominating specific students. This strategy appeared to cause uneven contribution from students to the class because the same students participated most of the time while other students hardly participated. Karla's beliefs in the roles of students as active participants, in the teacher's role as a facilitator, and that classes should be centred on students might be what encouraged her to exploit eliciting constantly.

Teaching practice 4: Communicative practice of grammar

A recurrent teaching practice of Karla is the communicative practice of grammar. In all of the classes observed, Karla organised activities that reflected a communicative view of language. She had students produce a description of parts of the university such as labs, libraries and the SAC. She also had students create a dialogue between a nutritionist and patient, a description of a classmate and a comparison of places, working in pairs or teams. This type of practice, encouraged by CLT, is contextualised and focused on meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

I try to set a real context for real use of the language, so students can practice the language using information they know and according to their needs, to their real life (CA4-fi).

Karla's comment illustrates her interest in having students practice English with a communicative purpose and using information which is familiar to them. It can also be argued that Karla's content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge appear to be central for the development of the communicative practice of grammar. This knowledge and the knowledge of learners that Karla also has, permit Karla to identify activities and contexts that enable students to comprehend and to use English structures in communicating. Overall, it could be argued that Karla's teaching practices suggest a social constructivist conception of language and language learning. Karla appears to mediate her students' learning mostly, by eliciting, using students' information, organising communicative practices and having students work together.

4.5.2 Overview of the case of Karla

It was observed that Karla tended to approach teaching in relaxed way. She built a friendly environment in which students could exchange opinions and personal information in her classes. In general, Karla started her classes by eliciting information on a grammar aspect to

introduce or review it using, most of the time, students' contextual information. Then, she had students do grammar activities or activities to develop the language skills in the textbook. Finally, she organised a communicative task for students to practice the language aspect within a familiar context. She usually contextualised this practice using students' information about the class, the university, the city and on Mexico. Karla developed classes in which activities evolved from controlled grammar practice to a communicative practice of the language. Karla, in contrast to Paul, Pam and Keith, permitted students to decide who to work with during pair and teamwork activities. She also allowed free participation from students in the class. Karla paid particular attention to the selection of the topics to encourage students' involvement.

As in the cases of Paul, Pam and Keith, the observations of Karla's classes, the interviews, as well as her journals, suggested that Karla's teaching practice was facilitated by her teacher knowledge base that was composed of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum knowledge and knowledge of learners. Nevertheless, Karla's pedagogical knowledge appeared to limit students' participation, as some students participated more frequently than others. Nonetheless, all the students seemed to be working in the class when individual work or teamwork took place. Additionally, it can be stated that Karla's teaching practices were driven by her beliefs, such as students should be active participants whereas the teacher should be the facilitator of learning, and communication should be the focus of language learning. Furthermore, she argued that teachers teach according to their beliefs:

Even if something is good, but I don't believe in that, I won't teach like that, so I think, each teacher teaches according to his or her beliefs (CS4-fgi).

Karla's learning experience and her teaching experience appear to be the main sources of her beliefs. She stated that she designed activities that were similar to the ones she did

when she was in the propedeutic year of the BA in ELT because if they worked for her, they were going to be good for her students. Karla also explained that her BA in ELT studies provided her with a base for her professional teaching work, and her professional experience has helped her to understand the teaching of English better. Therefore, for Karla, as in the cases of Paul, Pam and Keith, teaching experience has been essential for the development of the knowledge gained from initial training. Overall, it appears to be that, like Paul, Pam and Keith, Karla's teaching practices are supported by her knowledge but driven by her beliefs. Nevertheless, teacher's knowledge and beliefs belong to a continuum where they overlap and are difficult to differentiate (Borg, 2003).

4.6 OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR CASES

Taking into account the four cases and the aspects explored, teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices, it could be stated the following. In all four cases, teaching practices were found to have been informed by a teacher knowledge base which encompassed interwoven categories of knowledge including: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of the learners, knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of self. According to the case study teachers, their teaching experienced played an important role in the construction of their knowledge base.

The knowledge of ELT approaches is mainly involved by pedagogical content knowledge (Randall and Thornton, 20001) as explained in Chapter Two. Although this case study aimed to increase our understanding of the reasons behind teaching practices rather than to explore the application of a specific approach or method, it was found that Communicative Language Teaching and the Audiolingual Method were commonly used by all four teachers. For example, the four teachers organised different interaction patterns, all of them used students' information, and the four teachers conducted communicative practice of grammar. Paul and Pam used much teaching material. Keith's and Paul's classes had a

considerable amount of drill and repetition practice. Although, in the focus group interview, the participant teachers stated that they did not follow a specific teaching approach or method adapting their teaching to their students' profile instead, the practices observed and how they were conducted looked in general, to be representative of the Communicative approach or of the Audiolingual method. The classes of the four teachers, frequently, included a strong communicative aspect as well as the practice of a linguistic element. Thus, as Senior (2006) observed in a study of teachers teaching English to adults in the UK and Australia, in actual teaching, teachers adopt a pragmatic approach.

The teaching practices of the four case study teachers appeared to be driven by a variety of beliefs that they hold. Although these appeared to have different sources, teaching and learning experiences appeared to be the main source. Teaching experiences seem therefore to be significant not only in the development of teachers' knowledge but also in the development of their beliefs. The case study teachers' beliefs about the nature of the language and the nature of language learning illustrated their epistemological and ontological positions regarding these aspects. For example, a belief in language learning through repetitions and drills, representative practices of the Audiolingual method, illustrated a behaviourist conception of language learning. On the other side, a belief in language learning through the development of the language skills, encouraged by Communicative Language Teaching, shows a more constructivist conception of language learning. There was, however, some contradiction between some of the practices observed and the beliefs stated by the teachers. These points are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF EFL TEACHERS

While foreign language teacher's knowledge, teacher's beliefs and teaching practices have been extensively researched as separate entities, there has been less study of their interdependence. Moreover, research that explores these issues in relation to foreign language teaching within a Mexican context has been rarely developed. This case study research aimed to develop our understandings of how knowledge and beliefs about the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) intersect to inform the practices of Mexican teachers of EFL at a degree level through the following research questions:

1. What forms of knowledge do the case study teachers draw on in their classroom practices?
2. What are the case study teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning?
3. How do the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of the case study teachers interact?
4. Is it possible to draw any implication for the education of English language teachers in higher education in Mexico from this case study?

The case study teachers have different characteristics to be considered. For example, Karla is the only participant teacher that has a master degree. Paul moved to the USA when he was 11 years old, and lived there for about eight years, a situation that permitted him to learn English as a second language in its natural context. The other three teachers learned English as a foreign language through formal school instruction. They studied the propedeutic year of the BA in ELT as explained in Chapter Three. Two of the teachers, Paul and Keith have attended teaching training courses in USA. In the case of Pam, she is

the only teacher in the research that teaches English to foreign people that do not speak Spanish. These experiences have contributed to the knowledge and beliefs that underpin their teaching practices.

Nevertheless, as previously explained, the four case study teachers share some significant characteristics. All four teachers for example studied the same BA in ELT going through similar professional instruction. They work for the same university where they studied, and all of them work in at least two different educational contexts. These aspects might raise their awareness of main contextual characteristics. All four teachers work for the Foreign Language Program and teach English Two to students that study English as a university graduation requirement. Therefore, they teach the same level to students with a similar profile under similar conditions. They should all follow a program that is based on the same textbook. However, they have considerable autonomy to decide the manner of developing their classes and to choose their teaching practices. This study suggests that the teaching practices of the case study teachers are supported by their teacher knowledge base and impelled by the different beliefs about language and language teaching and learning that they hold. It was also identified that the participant teachers' practices tend to be representative of Communicative Language Teaching and of the Audiolingual method. The discussion in this chapter has been organised as a response to the research questions (RQ) that guided the construction of this case study as follows:

RQ1: What forms of knowledge do case study teachers draw on in their classroom practices?

The participant teachers' knowledge categories that appear to support their teaching practices are content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge, knowledge of learners, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts, (Shulman, 2004) and knowledge of the self (Turner-Bisset, 2001) at different degrees. Nevertheless, teacher knowledge, as exposed in teaching practices, is a unit where

the different types of knowledge are interrelated and support each other (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000 and Tsui, 2003). Moreover, the teachers' knowledge seems to be both tacit and explicit. They have explicit knowledge of theoretical aspects such as cooperative language learning, meaningful learning, learners and teachers roles, which are all issues that the teachers discussed. In addition, from teachers' performance and words, it could be inferred that they also had tacit knowledge that according to Eraut (2000, 2004) is developed from personally experienced events within relevant contexts. Moreover, the participant teachers emphasised that they had developed real understanding of many teaching aspects through their actual professional teaching practice. For instance, Pam became aware of the importance of checking instruction comprehension, and Karla realised the importance of varying the interaction pattern through their teaching experience. Keith stated that he knew about the theory of different teaching techniques when he was student of the BA in ELT. However, he stressed to have developed understanding of them through his teaching experience. Therefore, it could be said that teachers' knowledge has been largely developed from teaching experiences through a gradual acquisition of understandings.

The participant teachers' content knowledge has permitted them to teach in English and be able to explain the distinct linguistic aspects of the language, their relationships and uses since they not only possess knowledge about English, but they are also English proficient speakers. Therefore, it could be said that the participant content knowledge covers procedural knowledge of English, ability to speak the language (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000) as well as declarative knowledge of English, knowledge about the language (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000), for example, its grammar rules. These aspects of the content knowledge of language teachers become even more important when they are not native speakers, as is the case of the teachers participating in this study, since the development of content knowledge in foreign language teaching requires a long process of learning.

The teachers' explanations, examples and activities, among other teaching strategies suggest that their pedagogical content knowledge supports them in organising, representing and adapting language contents to the different learning needs of students. All four teachers know how to make language meanings and uses understandable and comprehensible for students. For example, Keith represented the meaning of some prepositions of place through drawings on the board whereas Pam used realia for their representation. In the case of Paul, he employed a wall-chart to offer examples, while Karla utilised the board and the classroom to explain them. Moreover, they are, in general, able to identify students' language learning problems, and they know how to solve these problems, aspects identified by Shulman (2004) that do not only indicate their pedagogical content knowledge, but also their knowledge of learners as stated by Pachler et al. (2007).

In addition, the way the teachers organise activities, the interaction patterns they apply, the questioning techniques they employ and the manner they address students suggest that the participant teachers possess general pedagogical knowledge. For instance, the teachers' general pedagogical knowledge can be inferred from the way Karla organises students for the communicative practice of the grammar contents, the manner Keith conducts eliciting, Paul's wide use of different interaction patterns, and the way Pam organises students to encourage collaborative learning. Their general pedagogical knowledge allows them to organise learning, maximise resources and time, handle classroom discipline and encourage participation. In general, the teachers demonstrated strategies and organisation of classroom management. Moreover, all four teachers teach in English. Spanish, their mother tongue, was barely used in all of the classes observed. Thus, the pedagogical knowledge of the language teacher, as Tsui (2003) stated, also covers the use of English in the classroom. Moreover, teaching in English also illustrates their content knowledge.

The participant teachers' knowledge of learners also contribute to their teaching practice in selecting materials and activities, organising pair and teamwork, contextualising teaching to respond to students' interests and needs. Moreover, it appears that the teachers have

developed in students positive attitudes towards English learning and constructed a positive learning atmosphere. In addition, it was identified that some of the teachers had also developed close relationships between them and students, aspect that is considered a distinctive characteristic of the foreign language teacher (Borg, 2006). It could be argued that this situation resulted from the relaxed working atmosphere constructed by the teachers. The teachers, in general, seemed very approachable and used to joke with students. Additionally, the teachers did not only have students exchange personal information, but they also offered personal information in the examples given to students as models for the language practices. For example, the teachers and students talked about their likes, experiences, families and studies. Therefore, they could know the human side of each other better. It could be concluded that these aspects contribute to the development of close relationships. Moreover, these practices appear to illustrate the construction of knowledge through social interaction in which the teachers mediate, through their examples, students' learning that is a central aspect of Sociocultural theory.

Curriculum knowledge refers to the knowledge of the programmes, materials and resources designed for the teaching of specific subjects (Shulman, 2004). The range of materials, methods and activities available to language teachers is also considered a characteristic of foreign language teaching (Borg, 2006). In Mexico, in general, institutional authorities in schools and universities have language teachers use a specific textbook and follow it as a program. The teachers in this research share a similar situation because the programs of the English courses they teach are based on the New American Inside Out series by MacMillan. In the classes observed, they made use of the textbook in different degrees, for example, Paul hardly ever had students work with the book in class whereas Karla had students do some book activities in every observed class. Nevertheless, all four teachers enhanced their teaching practices through a variety of materials and resources that they designed or adapted to their students' profile, which could illustrate not only their curriculum knowledge but also their knowledge of learners. Knowledge of learners is important for being able to adapt the teaching process, activities and materials, to respond to students' different needs (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001).

The four participant teachers work in two or three different educational contexts. They work for public and private institutions, primary schools, high schools and a university. It appears that the participant teachers' awareness of the distinct educational contexts they work in has enabled them to promote the best possible learning according to the different circumstances. For instance, Pam realises the differences between teaching English to undergraduate Mexican students in a university and teaching to international business executives in a company. She explained that, when working with the international executives, she bases the content of her teaching on students' present needs, whereas, she follows the English program when teaching in the university. Keith is also aware of the contextual differences that exist between primary schools and universities. Although he argues teaching in the same way in both contexts, he also explains that he changes the topic and level of English in the dynamics he develops according to the students' profile. This illustrates that the teachers' knowledge of the educational contexts they work in and of the constraints within these contexts informs their teaching practices.

Furthermore, the participant teachers' knowledge of self that refers to teachers' knowledge of their personal values, dispositions, strengths, and weaknesses among other aspects (Hativa, 2002; Turner-Bisset, 2001) has been evidenced at various degrees. For example, Paul is aware not only of his weakness of loving talking but also of being very caring and very meticulous. He also acknowledges that his initial work with children, and his way of being, have influenced the type of teacher he has become. Keith is also aware of the facts that he always wanted to be a dynamic teacher and that he has a kinaesthetic style of learning and teaching. He realizes that these aspects, in addition to his belief that learning should be enjoyable, have shaped his manner of teaching. Karla acknowledges that a variety of elements has contributed to her way of approaching teaching such as teachers, peers and colleagues as well as the teaching experiences that she has had at different educational contexts. She also realises that she has gone through a process of development to become the teacher that she is now. Pam is aware that her systematic way of being has helped her to focus on her students learning process. This characteristic has facilitated her guiding of students through different steps for the learning of the English in her classes. It

is important to emphasise two aspects. First, that in the teaching practices observed, any teacher knowledge category seems to presuppose other knowledge categories and second, the teaching practice displayed by the four participants appeared to depend on teacher knowledge where knowledge categories were interwoven. Moreover, analysis of the data indicates that the case study teachers' practices do not only depend on their knowledge but also on their beliefs. The teachers' beliefs appear to be important reasons behind the variation in the teaching practices of teachers that have followed the same ELT education program.

RQ2: What are the case study teachers' key beliefs about English language teaching and learning?

This research indicates that the participant teachers hold a wide variety of beliefs, bearing in mind that beliefs are evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable, stated or not, because beliefs in the main must be inferred from what teachers say and do (Pajares, 1992). For example, the participant teachers consider that knowing a language means being able to communicate in the language without necessarily being a high proficient speaker. Moreover, the four teachers state that the purpose of teaching and learning English should be being able to communicate. Learning a language by using it and language learning occurs when there is a need are beliefs that the case study teachers share. These beliefs would be in accordance with constructivist conceptions of language and language learning hold in Communicative Language Teaching. In addition, they all agree that the best way of teaching languages is according to student's profile, that a single best way of teaching does not exist. In the focus group interview, they all claim that teachers transmit knowledge and students develop it. Keith illustrated this belief through the following metaphor:

Knowledge could be like a seed, so you give them a seed and they have to make it grow (CS3-fgi).

Furthermore, similar to the research findings of Richards et al. (2001) on the beliefs of Asian and Australian language teachers of English, the teachers in this research believe that students should be active participants and responsible for their learning process, and that the teacher should be a guide and a facilitator in that process, beliefs that appear to be in accordance with the age of the students as young adults and with the context of higher education of the study. Additionally, the four teachers consider that all the interaction patterns, individual, pair, small group and whole group work should be employed in the teaching of English as a foreign language to foster its use and practice. Overall, these beliefs illustrate the epistemological positions of the participant teachers regarding language and language teaching and learning. Moreover, it could be said that most of these beliefs suggest a social constructivist position.

The participant teachers' beliefs tend to have distinct origins. Teachers' own experience as language learners are an important source of their beliefs. When teachers' beliefs about teaching mirror their experience as language learners, teachers own experience as language learners is regarded as their source (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006). For instance, Karla designed activities that were similar to the ones she carried out when she was a language student because she considered that if those activities were helpful for her, they were going to be beneficial for her students. Paul also said that he played music while students worked because listening to music when he was a student helped him focus his attention on the activity. Moreover, Keith explained that, as a student of French, he experienced some techniques that were so attractive that he has adopted them for the teaching of English.

All the four teachers tend to trust in teaching techniques that have worked well for them. Consequently, teaching experience is not only a source of knowledge but it is also a central source of teachers' beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006). Pam explicitly stated that she had developed a belief in using information gap activities because she identified students practicing and remembering language items straightforwardly through these kinds of activities. In the case of Paul, using a variety of interaction patterns is a

teaching practice that he not only daily exploits in his classes but also recommends. For Keith, drills and repetitions have worked well, thus he applies them most of the time. In the case of Karla, using information students physically know has been particularly successful, so she employs this type of information to contextualise her teaching activities. Additionally, principles derived from an approach or methods might be the origin of teachers' beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006), as in the cases of Paul and Keith, who developed their belief in drills after having studied Rassias methods.

Another important source of the case study teachers' beliefs is the teachers' personal preferences as learners. The observations and interviews conducted suggest that the beliefs originated in the teachers' personal characteristics, such as being energetic, systematic or relaxed, tend to shape their general approach to language teaching. Moreover, similar to the findings of the study of thirty ESL teachers developed by Johnson (1992 cited in Richards and Lockhart, 1994), it was identified that teachers' beliefs and learning preferences would influence their behaviour in the classroom more than any imposed methodology or course book they have to follow.

RQ3: How do the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of the case study teachers interact?

The participant teachers initially explained their teaching practices in terms of learning objectives. However, when they were questioned more specifically, all four teachers tended to describe them in terms of their knowledge and beliefs as noted by Borg (2003). Therefore, it could be assumed that the participants' teaching practices are not only informed by their teacher knowledge base but also by a variety of beliefs. In fact, all four teachers explained to apply only the teaching techniques in which they believed. For instance, in the focus group interview, Karla stated:

“Cause, even if something is good but I don’t believe in that, I won’t teach like that, so..., I think each teacher teaches according to his or her beliefs” (CS4-fgi).

This type of teachers’ statements infers the interconnection between their knowledge, beliefs and practices. Additionally, they suggest that teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are part of a continuum where teachers’ knowledge becomes beliefs through being successful in teaching practices. It could be argued therefore that teachers start believing in certain teaching practices when they experience that they work and their successful experience feeds their belief (Guskey, 2002). For example, both Paul and Keith employ repetitions in their English classes, a teaching technique that is based particularly in their knowledge of the Rassias method, part of their pedagogical content knowledge, and on the belief, they developed from their successful experience with it.

In addition, a variety of practices that seem to reflect the participant teachers’ beliefs, were observed in the teaching of the same topics. They vary in spite of the fact that teachers should follow the same program and use the same course book. Overall, it can be argued, as Williams and Burden (1997) noted, that the participant teachers’ beliefs, whether they are implicit or explicit appear to inform every teaching action they develop. Additionally, a specific belief held by the teachers tends to be enacted through distinct teaching practices, and a specific teaching practice may be the expression of different beliefs, similar to Breen’s (2001) research findings in the principles that guided the teaching practices of experienced ESL teachers. For example, one of the recurrent practices of Pam is the use of pair and group work. This practice appears to be impelled by Pam’s beliefs that a language is learnt through practice, language learning and teaching should be focused on communication, and cooperative learning facilitates language learning. Thus, a single practice is informed by different beliefs. In addition, her belief that language learning and teaching should be focused on communication also encourages the application of information gap activities that is another characteristic teaching practice of Pam. Therefore, a single belief is enacted through two different practices.

On the other side, similar teaching practices were also observed. Those practices appear to be driven not only by similar beliefs but also by different ones. For example, Karla, Paul and Keith apply the techniques of eliciting and using of students' information in their classes. Their teacher knowledge base seems to support the teachers in the application of these techniques. Their shared beliefs, such as that students should be active participants in their learning process and the teachers should be guides of this process might drive the application of those techniques. Nevertheless, these same practices could also be motivated by different beliefs that teachers hold since Keith believes in using students' previous knowledge, Karla in creating meaningful activities by using students' information and Paul in using simulated real situations based on students to encourage their English language learning. All four participant teachers also use a variety of interaction patterns, teaching technique that appears to be also supported by their teacher knowledge base and impelled by diverse beliefs. For Pam, organising pair and teamwork is necessary for the development of collaborative learning; for Keith, organising these interaction patterns is important for students to get to know each other; for Karla, it is important because knowing English is being able to interact; and for Paul because students should interact not only with the teacher but also with other students. Therefore, it could be argued that a specific teaching practice can be encouraged by a variety of beliefs. Overall, these case studies indicate that teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices are interrelated and they inform each other in a continuous way as researchers such as Turner-Bisset (2001), Dunkim (2002), and Andrews (2003) have argued.

The participant teachers' practices also tend to be enlightened by their beliefs about the nature of the subject, the nature of the learning process and the nature of the teaching act (Nunan, 2004). That is to say, that teachers' thoughts about what it means to know a language, about how learners become speakers and about how to teach learners to become speakers of the foreign language informed their teaching practices. For example, Paul explained that he believed that learning took place when there was a need, thus he was used to setting goals for their students to reach. In Pam's opinion, learners become speakers by using and practicing with the language. Therefore, she has students practice through

information gap activities. Karla believes that language teaching and learning should be focused on communication, thus, she designs activities where students can exchange real information.

Nevertheless, from observing the teaching practices of the case study teachers, some discrepancies regarding their stated beliefs were identified. Those discrepancies could be caused by the nature of the beliefs teachers hold. Peripheral beliefs are theoretically embraced whereas core beliefs are grounded in experience, aspect that makes the latter type of beliefs more influential (Phipps and Borg, 2009). For instance, Paul believes that language teaching should be focused on communication, a belief that could be regarded as peripheral. On the other side, he also believes in drills and repetitions, representative practices of the Audiolingual Method, because he has had successful experiences with these techniques. Therefore, this later core belief experientially ingrained would probably be more powerful. Another example of contradiction was identified in Karla's explanation about focusing on oral practice when teaching English to university small groups whereas, when working with big high school groups, she has students work more in a written way. It appears to be that contextual factors, such as the size of the high school group, could cause tensions between Karla's beliefs and teaching practices in high school, since contextual factors seem to influence the degree of teachers acting in accordance with their beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Another reason behind this change in teaching practices, similar to Paul's case, could be the different types of beliefs that teachers hold. It could be speculated that a peripheral belief, such as communication should be the focus of language learning, was weaker than any other possible core belief that she might develop from working with big high school groups since peripheral and core beliefs are not held with the same level of conviction (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Moreover, "peripheral beliefs are not necessarily implemented in practices" (Phipps and Borg, 2009, p. 388). Nevertheless, the study of the discrepancies between what teachers do and their professed beliefs about language teaching and language learning would require longer research that entailed more time than the allocated by the Professional Doctorate to be clearly understood.

Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and BA in ELT studies

All four participant teachers studied the BA in ELT, curriculum 2003. Therefore, it could be argued that the same professional preparation of all four teachers has guided them not only to carry out specific teaching practices but it has also raised specific peripheral beliefs in them. This last aspect is similar to that identified by Borg (1998) in the case study of an experienced EFL teacher who developed beliefs from his initial teacher training that had lasting influence in his teaching practices. Nevertheless, it was recognised that the case study teachers hardly ever justified their teaching practices by referring to a specific methodology similarly to the results of the study on the teaching of grammar of 60 ESL teachers conducted by Ebsworth and Schweer (1997 cited in Johnston and Goettsch, 2000). Moreover, the case study teachers mainly explained their practices based on their teaching experiences and on their beliefs involved from these experiences. The BA in ELT studied by the four participants is composed of strands that aim to develop the different knowledge categories of the English language teacher knowledge base as discussed in Chapter Two. Nonetheless, although all four teachers acknowledged that their BA in ELT studies provided them with a knowledge base for their professional teaching practice, they regard their professional teaching practice as the main source of their knowledge. This aspect suggests that there is a dialectical relation between teachers' knowledge and their practice that facilitate new understandings to become part of their knowledge; knowledge that supports their future teaching practices as Tsui's comparative research (2003) of four ESL novice-expert teachers, teaching in secondary schools in Hong Kong also illustrated. Additionally, beliefs that could be considered experientially engrained –core beliefs– seem to be more influential than theoretically embraced beliefs in the practice of teachers as found in Phipps and Borg's research (2009) on the teaching of grammar and as seen in some of the teaching practices of Paul, Pam, Keith and Karla in the present case study.

Awareness of the fundamental role of teaching experience in the construction of knowledge about teaching would be important in teacher education as noted by Korthagen (2009). Therefore, offering student-teachers opportunities of learning through teaching experiences is important for teacher education since these experiences contribute to the

development of their knowledge. In addition, a major aspect about language teachers' education that needs to be taken into account when designing and implementing the BA in ELT curriculum is that teachers' knowledge and their teaching practices inform each other (Johnston and Goettsh, 2000) and at the same time, teaching practices are informed by teachers' beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Borg, 2003, 2006). Awareness of that will offer new insights into language teaching.

RQ 4: Is it possible to draw any implication for language teaching education in higher education in Mexico from this case study?

The above insights emerged from the analysis of data relating to four Mexican EFL teachers working in a state university and are therefore of particular relevance to language teacher education in Mexico. English language teacher education has been conducted from distinct approaches (Randall with Thornton, 2004; Diaz Maggioli, 2012). One approach is the craft model (Wallace, 1991) that focused on training student teachers on practical aspects of teaching such as presenting language structures, giving instructions, correcting errors and questioning techniques. Consequently, becoming a teacher consisted of "acquiring a set of observable classroom behaviours" (Randall with Thornton, 2004, p. 35). The main role of the teacher educator was as a model while the student teachers' main role was that of the apprentice. In addition, the main sources for training were uniform set of methods, techniques, procedures and materials (Diaz Maggioli, 2012). Freeman (1996) noted that, in this approach, teaching tends to be separated from the teacher and to be explained in impersonal behaviours without taking in consideration the contexts where teaching is conducted. A different approach is the applied science model. It centres upon providing student teachers with knowledge derived from empirical science in disciplines such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics (Wallace, 1991). It focuses on developing knowledge of theory to guide the teaching practice. Within this approach, the main role of the teacher educator is as a resources selector and a model while the student teachers' main model is as reader and applier of theory (Diaz Maggioli, 2012). It could be said that, in Mexico, English language teacher education has been approached from the applied science model since the professionalization of language teaching process initiated in the 1990s. In

addition, there have been attempts to develop English language teacher education from the reflective model. The reflective model encompasses received knowledge obtained from theoretical information as well as experiential knowledge developed from personal and professional experience (Wallace, 1991). It aims to enhance teachers' reflection on their practices to inform their teaching. For the reflective model, reflection on the practical skills of teaching as well as on the role of teachers' cognition in their teaching practice is significant (Randall and Thornton, 2001).

Nevertheless, it appears that language teacher education in Mexico, in various cases, has tended to be based on providing theoretical information and setting prescribed practices of teaching without awareness that the language teacher knowledge base seems to have a process-oriented nature. This is to say, that teacher knowledge is developed through a process of understanding mainly based on narrative ways of knowing, as different studies (see for example Johnstone and Goettsch, 2000) and also the present research illustrate. This case study identified that the participant teachers' knowledge tends to support their teaching practice. However, they make little reference to knowledge developed during their BA in ELT studies that could be considered received knowledge, whereas, they assign a central role to their teaching experience in the construction of knowledge about teaching as explained above. This aspect appears to emphasise the experiential knowledge of the participants, knowledge that is developed from personal and professional experiences (Bruner, 1985 cited in Johnston and Goettsch, 2000). Moreover, teachers' experiences appear to contribute to the development of core beliefs that tend to exert an important influence in teachers' performance (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

It could be argued that, during their BA in ELT studies, student teachers develop their teacher knowledge base at different degrees. However, commonly, this knowledge appears to be at the level of being informed about language teaching issues that later on, through teaching practice, would be understood. Therefore, it is important to make a revision of the BA in ELT curriculum in Mexico, bearing in mind aspects, such as number of subjects and

hours focused on theoretical issues and on the practice of language teaching as well as the methodology followed in theoretical subjects and the practicum strand in order to encourage teacher education to be, from its beginning, a construction of understanding rather than only a transmission of theoretical information.

I would also argue that the congruence and balance between theory and practice in the BA in ELT curriculum in relation to time spent and manners of approaching the different contents of the BA in ELT programs could help student teachers start constructing the teacher knowledge base required for the teaching of English as a foreign language from the beginning of their ELT studies. Nevertheless, the ELT curriculum as most of the university curricula in Mexico, commonly has a modularised structure that tends to emphasise received knowledge and makes language student teachers obtain fragmented information. Therefore, in agreement with researchers such as Johnstone and Goettsch (2000) and Korthagen (2010), I would suggest a more integrated approach to language teacher education that highlights the process-oriented nature of teacher knowledge; an approach that considers that knowledge is not transmitted but created, that learning is a collaborative construction of meaning, and that teachers' mediation is central for students' learning. Additionally, I would not only suggest an approach to integrate the distinct teacher knowledge categories, but I would also propose an approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and their teaching practices and the processes they involve because the present case study identified that it appears to be that:

- Teachers use only the knowledge in which they believe.
- Teachers hold a variety of beliefs that inform their teaching practices.
- Beliefs derived from personal learning and teaching experiences have a major influence in teaching practices.
- Beliefs caused by teachers' preferences as learners tend to delineate their approach to teaching practice in general.
- There are some tensions between the teachers' different types of beliefs.

The four cases have helped to illustrate the interconnection between their knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices in the same way as identified by research developed in other contexts by Golombek (1998), Borg (2001, 2003), Turner-Bisset (2001) and Andrews (2003) among others. Therefore, a clear understanding of the role of teachers' knowledge and beliefs in their teaching practices for teachers as well as for teacher educators could enable them to improve teachers' development processes. Moreover, the language teacher education processes in Mexico could be enhanced through the awareness of the interconnected relation between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices.

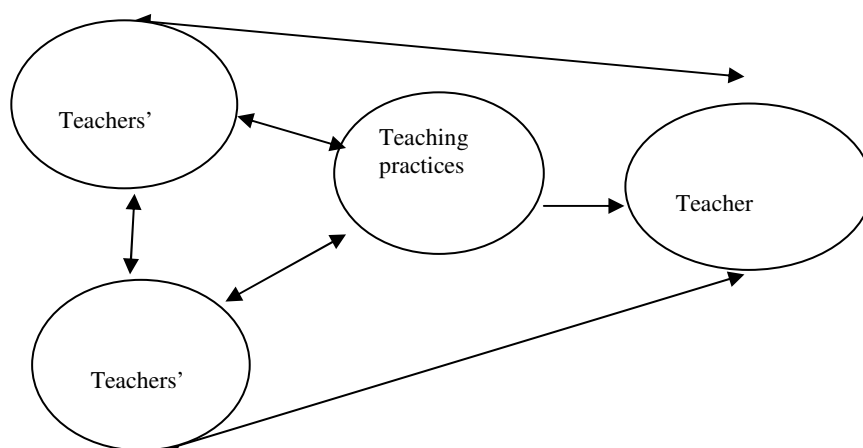


Figure 5.1: A model of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices

This interconnection could be better represented by gears to exemplify how teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices interact and inform each other persistently in a dynamic process. A gear model of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices relationship, as a mechanism in action, would also more accurately illustrate the nature of the teacher knowledge as a construction process informed by teachers' beliefs and their practices.

Teachers' knowledge



Teachers' practices

Figure 5.2: A gear model of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices relationship

Teachers' beliefs

This model illustrates that teaching practices enhance teachers' knowledge because they help teachers develop new understandings. The teaching practices are, at the same time, supported by the teacher's knowledge which is implemented into teaching practices according to the teacher's beliefs. The teachers' beliefs are also informed by the teaching practice itself, as well as by the teacher's knowledge. Therefore, a continuous interactive relationship takes place.

Therefore, it is important for the BA in ELT curriculum as well as the language teacher educator to allocate opportunities for:

- Working on and raising awareness of students-teachers' beliefs about the language teaching area, for example, conception of language and language learning in the methodology and practicum strands of the ELT curriculum.

- Working on and raising awareness of the interaction between students-teachers' beliefs and knowledge about language teaching in the methodology and practicum strands of the ELT curriculum.
- Working on and raising awareness of students-teachers' strengths and limitations of their knowledge and beliefs in the practicum strand of the ELT curriculum.

In summary, the present case study illustrates the interactive relationship between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices and the process-oriented nature of the teacher knowledge base. Consequently, awareness of these aspects appears to be significant for the development of the education of teachers of English as a foreign language within the Mexican context.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE, FURTHER RESEARCH AND REFLECTIONS

The present case study has been developed with the aim of increasing our understanding of how teachers' practices are informed by their knowledge and beliefs about the teaching of English as a foreign language in higher education in Mexico. It has been conducted from an interpretivist approach and constructed through the study of four Mexican teachers, taking into consideration their own perspectives on the phenomenon. The study aimed to address an identified research gap and to contribute to the research on the teaching of English as a foreign language in Mexico. The case study illustrates the relevance that teachers' knowledge and beliefs to their teaching practices since they were the principal reasons teachers offered as explanations for their practices as Borg's (2003) research previously identified. The conclusions drawn about teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices, were based on a combination of the event observed, the teachers' explanations about the observed event, the teacher's comments outside of the events observed, and my interpretation of all this information, similarly to the process used by Andon (2009). This chapter presents the conclusions reached through the development of the case study. It explains the contribution to knowledge as well as the implications for ELT education of the study. The chapter also identifies emerging issues that need further research. Finally, personal and professional lessons developed through the construction of the case study are shared.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices

This case study of Mexican teachers helped to exemplify the supporting role of English language teacher knowledge base composed of content knowledge, pedagogical content

knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge, knowledge of learners, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts (Shulman, 2004) and knowledge of self (Turner-Bisset, 2001) in their teaching practices. These teaching practices appear to depend on a teacher knowledge base in which knowledge categories are interwoven and any category presupposes other knowledge categories.

Nevertheless, this research also illustrates the gap that appears to be between knowledge generated by researchers and the knowledge managed by teachers. It seems to be that researchers develop knowledge that, in the best case, is offered from teacher educators to student teachers as information that, in the best case as well, is the basis for their development of knowledge. Thus, the transferability of research to classrooms seems difficult. For example, research has postulated distinct theories of learning such as behaviourism and social constructivism that are the foundation of different language teaching approaches and methods (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; De Bot et al., 2005). Teachers, on the other hand, may lack of awareness of the relevance of those theories to the teaching of English as a foreign language as well as lack of explicit knowledge of the corresponding approaches and their relevance to their teaching practices as this case study identified.

I initiated this research with the assumption that the BA in ELT studies made a significant contribution to teachers' knowledge, however, the case study teachers considered professional experience as their main source of knowledge development. They acknowledged the BA in ELT as an important base for language teaching. Nevertheless they underlined that through their professional practice, they developed a better understanding of issues seen in their BA studies. Although this situation could only reflect the perception of the teachers in the study, it would be relevant to examine this issue since teachers' knowledge appears mostly developed from personal and professional experiences. Moreover, teachers' knowledge seems to be predominantly tacit. It must be inferred from teachers' behaviour (Eraut, 2000, 2004) because, in contrast to explicit knowledge that can

be articulated, tacit knowledge is manifested (Lam, 2000). Overall, teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices are interconnected.

The present research identified that teaching practices of the case study teachers are, in general, representative of Communicative Language Teaching and The Audiolingual Method. The case study illustrates that teaching practices are not only supported by teachers' knowledge but they are also enlightened by teachers' beliefs as noted by Pajares (1992). Teachers' practices seem to be informed by their beliefs about what it means to know a language, about how learners become speakers of a foreign language and about how best to teach learners to become speakers of that language. These beliefs suggest, in general, a social constructivist stance from the participant teachers. However, some of their practices contradict this stance. Overall, it could be stated that the teachers' beliefs, whether they are implicit or explicit appear to inform every teaching practice they develop (Williams and Burden, 1997). In addition, it seems that a specific belief held by the teachers tends to be enacted through distinct teaching practices, and a specific teaching practise may be the expression of different beliefs. It could be also argued that teacher's knowledge and beliefs feed each other through teaching practices, and they become daily teaching activities or even, teaching habits that are not questioned anymore. It also appears that teachers' beliefs have a predominant role in their teaching since the teachers have stated using only the knowledge in which they believe. Nevertheless, identifying where knowledge ended and beliefs started was highly problematic (Pajares, 1992) because knowledge and beliefs tend to be interlinked (Borg, 2003).

6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ELT

EDUCATION

This case study contributes to research developed on the topic since the relationships between knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of Mexican teachers of English as a foreign language, considering the three aspects simultaneously have, as have been noted previously, seldom been researched before. This case study, therefore, fulfils a gap in the

literature and adds evidence from a Mexican case to the research developed in other contexts.

I acknowledge that case study research especially develops context-dependent knowledge since cases exist in contexts (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Nevertheless, the present case study could contribute to the general understanding of teaching practices. This case study has been constructed through rich descriptive data that allows researchers to observe the similarity between their contexts and of the present study to be able to determine the applicability of the findings to their contexts. Nonetheless, following Phipps and Borg's (2009) line of argument in their research of grammar teaching practices, I would argue that, although the teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices stressed here are particular to the context studied, a state university in Mexico, the relationships between teachers' practices and their knowledge and beliefs are pertinent to, and offer a frame of reference for research in other contexts that aims to increase our understanding of the interconnection between foreign language teachers' practices and their knowledge and beliefs.

The findings of the study could also illuminate language teacher education in Mexican universities. Language teacher education processes could be enhanced through the awareness of the existence of a continuous interactive relationship between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices as well as of the importance of the development of teachers' experiential knowledge in the implementation of BA in ELT programs, since the present case study has also illustrated the central role that personal and teaching experiences have in the development of knowledge. Thus, it is important to modify the BA in ELT curriculums, as well as to reconceptualise language teacher education to support future language teachers to construct the knowledge they require for language teaching by providing them with experiences from which this knowledge can be developed. It could be said that transforming teaching into students' learning –considering the key role that teaching experiences play in the development of teacher knowledge-- appears to be an essential mission for teacher educators.

This case study has already made a contribution to the development of language teacher education in Mexico, as during 2010 and 2011, when as a member of the committee in charge of the revision of the BA in ELT curriculum offered by the university I work for, aspects such as the quantity of theoretical subjects that the curriculum covers and the methodology followed by these subjects were analysed. Being aware of the central role that personal and professional experience has in the construction of teacher knowledge, I suggested some changes to the new curriculum taking these aspects into consideration. After intensive sessions of work, the new curriculum that initiated in August 2012 decreased the number of subjects that compose it. The number of theoretical hours was also reduced while the number of practical hours was increased (Appendix 9). Moreover, the methodology of its programs is being modified to emphasise the role of the students as active participants and the role of the teacher educator as a facilitator as well as the importance of the development of learning processes. Furthermore, the evaluation of the subjects is going to be mainly done through integrative projects. Nonetheless, modifying BA in ELT curriculums and the programs of the subjects that compose them, though a necessary first action, would be worthless if teacher educators do not work along the same lines since teachers have a central role in learning processes (Harris, 2005; Day et al., 2007; Murillo, 2007; Townsend, 2007). Teacher educators need to reinvent their approach to teaching being aware of their vital role as mediators of learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006), and that learning is a collaborative social interactive process (Applefield et al., 2001). Therefore, much work still needs to be conducted regarding these aspects.

6.3 FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this case study was to increase our understandings of how knowledge and beliefs about the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) intersect to inform the practices of Mexican teachers of EFL at a degree level. Nevertheless, there were some cases where the teachers did not know the actual reasons of their teaching practices or how they developed the knowledge or beliefs that those practices implied. Moreover, some inconsistency between some teachers' practices and their manifested beliefs was identified. These discrepancies could be caused by diverse reasons such as the nature of the beliefs

teachers hold as explained in Chapter Five or/and by contextual factors. Therefore, in order to clarify these issues, further research centred on how specific types of beliefs –peripheral and core beliefs– informed teaching practices, and research focused on how contextual factors influence the extent teachers teach in accordance to their beliefs seem relevant to be conducted. Therefore, questions such as whether changes in teaching practices were impelled by contextual constraints or because of the different types of beliefs that teachers hold remain unanswered.

In addition, this case study of Mexican language teachers has raised awareness of the significance of teaching experience in the construction of knowledge as well as the main role of tacit knowledge in language teaching practices. Therefore, research on the role and development of experiential and tacit knowledge of the Mexican teacher of English as a foreign language in order to strengthen its construction in language teacher education would be important to be developed.

6.4 PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

The development of this case study research also offered me professional and personal learning experiences. The data collection process was not only the most demanding stage but also the most enjoyable. The little reference of the teachers to the BA in ELT as a source of their knowledge was striking. At the beginning, it made me question my performance as a teacher educator severely. However, through different strategies such as contrasting what was expected from a researcher to what was expected from an educator as explained in Chapter Three, I was able to not only be a teacher educator but also to become a researcher. Then, aiming to understand the participants' teaching practices and taking into consideration their perspectives, I could direct my attention to the focus of the research - the teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices.

Being a teacher educator appears to have strengthened the construction of the case study since my knowledge of the story has helped me telling it (Freeman, 1996). While not teaching for three years I have spent as a researcher, I have had the opportunity of conducting two teacher development workshops that have permitted me to observe in myself, what I have been researching. I have identified how my beliefs inform my teaching practices that are supported at the same time, by my knowledge. For example, some of my teaching techniques were pair work, use of learners' previous knowledge and establishing content relations that enacted my beliefs that knowledge is constructed through interaction, it is based on previous knowledge, and it is developed by creating connections.

Another significant challenge in developing this case study research as well as studying the doctorate was facing the loneliness of working following a distance-learning model. Sometimes the need of having an interlocutor was imperative, but difficult to find. This situation has also proved helpful in learning to be more resourceful and self-confident. Additionally, in spite of the fact that the process of doing this doctorate has been highly demanding, and a times very stressful, it has enabled me to participate more easily and deeply in distinct aspects of my profession such as reviewing BA in ELT curriculums, designing subject programs, evaluating BA theses, speaking at conferences and conducting teacher development sessions. Overall, the doctorate has helped me approach research with more rigour and understanding of the distinct stages that it encompasses as well as its development process as a whole. It has helped me develop a more reflective self.

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Appendix 1: Information letter for participants



Aguascalientes, Ags., Mexico, 27th January, 2011

Dear English Teacher,

I am developing a research study titled: Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices: A case study on English language teaching for the final phase of the International Professional Doctorate in Education that I am studying at the University of Sussex with the support of "PROMEP" and the "UAA".

I would like to invite you to take part in this study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

I will be developing a research study on the interaction between teachers' knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices.

I have thought of you because you studied the BA in ELT at the State University of Aguascalientes (UAA) and you are teaching English for the Foreign Languages program. Three more teachers with the same experiences will also be asked to participate in the study.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

The development of this study requires your invaluable contribution and will include the following actions:

1. Participating in an initial focus group interview with the other three teachers that will be recorded.
2. Asking for your students consent to have an observer and video recording one of the classes, explaining that they are not the focus of the study.
3. Having a weekly observation preceded and followed by short conversations on your lesson plan and thoughts on the class given; conversations that will be also recorded. This action will take place during five weeks.
4. Allowing one of your classes given in this period be videotaped to discuss teaching practices.
5. The teachers writing a diary on teaching practices considering their knowledge and beliefs about ELT once a week.
6. Having a closing individual interview if it is needed in order to clarify the data obtained during the process. .

I would like to emphasize that confidentiality will be well protected by changing the names of the participants; setting rules about the confidentiality of the discussion before developing focus group interviews, and destroying the audio and video recordings once the thesis is completed and the data no longer needed. The data obtained in this study will be used for my thesis and dissemination of the findings in conferences and academic papers in accordance with confidentiality and anonymity criteria (Data Protection Act 1998).

I would also like to state that I do believe that your participation in this study may contribute to your development as a language teacher. I would like to offer you a summary of the topics discussed in the focus group interviews and a summary of the research as a whole at the end of the process if you are interested in having this information.

If you required any further information on the subject or have any question, please do not hesitate on contact me. Thank you for reading the information sheet. I would really appreciate your support.

Truly yours

Maria Esther Lemus Hidalgo

Appendix 2: Consent Form For Teachers



PROJECT TITLE: *Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices: A case study on English language teaching.*

Project Approval *1011/09/04*

Reference:

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

1. Participate in an initial focus group interview that will be recorded.
2. Ask for my students consent to have an observer for one module and that this will include the video recording one of the classes, It will be clearly explained that they are not the focus of the study.
3. Have a weekly observation preceded and followed by short conversations on my lesson plan and thoughts on the class given; conversations that will be also recorded. This action will take place during five weeks.
4. Allow one of my classes given in this period to be videotaped.
5. Write a diary on teaching practices considering my knowledge and beliefs about ELT.
6. Have a closing individual interview if it is needed in order to clarify the data obtained during the process.

I understand that the name of the participants will be changed; a set of rules designed to protect confidentiality will be stated before developing focus group interviews, and the audio and video recordings done during the process will be destroyed once the thesis is completed and the data no longer needed to protect the confidentiality of my participation in this study. However, I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in the focus group interviews.

I understand that I will be given a summary of the topics discussed in the focus group interviews for my approval before being included in the write up of the research.

I understand that I will be also given a summary of the research as a whole at the end of the process if I am interested in having this information.

I understand that the dissemination of the findings of this study in conferences and academic papers will be treated in accordance with confidentiality and anonymity criteria (Data Protection Act 1998).

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name:

Signature

Date:

Appendix 3: Research information sheet for students

Aguascalientes, Ags., Mexico, ____ February, 2012

Dear student,

I am developing a research study titled: Teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices: A case study on English language teaching for the final phase of the International Professional Doctorate in Education that I am studying at the University of Sussex with the support of the "UAA".

It is relevant to underline that the research is totally focused on the English language teachers and their practices, not on students.

The data obtained will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The video recording will be destroyed once the thesis is completed and the data no longer needed

I would appreciate your support and consent for videotaping one of the classes. However, if you do not wish to participate, the camera will be set so no data specific to you be collected.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate on contact me.

Truly yours,

MA in AL Maria Esther Lemus Hidalgo

Language Department

NOTE: This letter was given to students in Spanish

Appendix 4: Observational protocol

Observation Protocol

Date _____

Descriptions

Aspects to be clarified

Reflections

INDICATIVE ASPECTS FOR OBSERVATIONS

RICHARDS & RODGERS (2001)

1. Teaching activities
E.g. Teaching language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and teaching language systems (grammar, phonetics)
2. Teachers' roles
E.g. instructor, explainer, monitor, elicitor and facilitator
3. Instructional materials
E.g. authentic or unauthentic materials
4. Interaction patterns.
E.g. individual work, pair work, group work, whole group
5. Procedures
E.g. Teacher or students centred, process or product focus, cover or overt grammar and inductive or deductive.

SHULMAN (1986)

1. Content knowledge: English
2. General pedagogical Knowledge: E.g. classroom management
3. Curriculum Knowledge: E.g. program, materials, resources
4. PCK: E.g. representations: analogies, metaphors, examples, illustrations, activities, explanations
5. Knowledge of learners: E.g. Types of activities, materials, topics, contexts
6. Knowledge context: E.g. University context
7. Knowledge of educational ends: E.g. Higher education, University's, teacher's

TURNER-BISSET (2001)

8. Teacher's knowledge of self: Eg. Strengths, limitations, values

Appendix 5: Indicative questions for interview on beliefs

INTERVIEW (5TH WEEK)

Indicative Questions

What roles should teachers have in English classes?

What actions are essential to teach English?

What should the focus of English classes be?

What type of interaction patterns should be developed in an English class?

Appendix 6: Journal form**TEACHERS' JOURNAL****Date:** _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Describe briefly a teaching activity or experience that particularly got your attention this week. Explain your reasons for developing that activity. Explain if you hold a belief or know any theoretical information that supports you in planning and carrying on that activity.

Brief description:

Explanation:

Appendix 7: Codes of Case Studies

PAUL: CASE STUDY 1

Case study 1 conversation 1: CS1- c1

Case study 1 conversation 2: CS1- c2

Case study 1 conversation 3: CS1- c3

Case study 1 conversation 4: CS1- c4

Case study 1 Focus group interview: CS1-fgi

Case study 1 Beliefs interview: CS1-bi

Case study 1 Video interview: CS1-vi

Case study 1 Final interview: CS1-fi

Case study 1 Journal 1: CS1-j1

Case study 1 Journal 2: CS1-j2

Case study 1 Journal 3: CS1-j3

Case study 1 Reflection 1: CS1- r1

Case study 1 Reflection 2: CS1-r2

PAM: CASE STUDY 2

Case study 2 conversation 1: CS2- c1

Case study 2 conversation 2: CS2- c2

Case study 2 conversation 3: CS2- c3

Case study 2 conversation 4: CS2- c4

Case study 2 Focus group interview: CS2-fgi

Case study 2 Beliefs interview: CS2-bi

Case study 2 Video interview: CS2- vi

Case study 2 Final interview: CS2-fi

Case study 2 Journal 1: CS2-j1

Case study 2 Journal 2: CS2-j2

Case study 2 Journal 3: CS2-j3

Case study 2 Reflection 1: CS2- r1

Case study 2 Reflection 2: CS2-r2

KEITH: CASE STUDY 3

Case study 3 conversation 1: CS3- c1

Case study 3 conversation 2: CS3- c2

Case study 3 conversation 3: CS3- c3

Case study 3 conversation 4: CS3- c4

Case study 3 Focus group interview: CS3-fgi

Case study 3 Beliefs interview: CS3-bi

Case study 3 Video interview: CS3-vi

Case study 3 Final interview: CS3-fi

Case study 3 Journal 1: CS3-j1

Case study 3 Journal 2: CS3-j2

Case study 3 Journal 3: CS3-j3

Case study 3 Reflection 1: CS3- r1

Case study 3 Reflection 2: CS3-r2

KARLA: CASE STUDY 4

Case study 4 conversation 1: CS4- c1

Case study 4 conversation 2: CS4- c2

Case study 4 conversation 3: CS4- c3

Case study 4 conversation 4: CS4- c4

Case study 4 Focus group interview: CS4-fgi

Case study 4 Beliefs interview: C4-bi

Case study 4 Video interview: CS4-vi

Case study 4 Final interview: C4-fi

Case study 4 Journal 1: CS1-j1

Case study 4 Journal 2: CS1-j2

Case study 4 Journal 3: CS1-j3

Case study 4 Reflection 4: CS1- r1

Case study 4 Reflection 4: CS1-r2

Appendix 8: Codification Summary

A PAM Interview Codes	CH KEITH Interview Codes	J KARLA Interview Codes	P PAUL Interview Codes
<p>Description of practice</p> <p>Previous knowledge</p> <p>Focus on skills</p> <p>Gap activities</p> <p>Meaningful activities</p> <p>Belief in meaningful activities</p> <p>Teaching Experience as belief source</p> <p>Colaborating learning definition</p> <p>Belief in Colaborating learning</p> <p>BA in ELT as source of belief</p> <p>Description of session</p> <p>Practice of subskills</p> <p>Reason for listening activity</p> <p>Knowledge of SS' needs</p> <p>BA in ELT as source of knowledge</p> <p>Creating Positive learning environment</p> <p>Exposing SS to real language</p> <p>Knowledge of a theory</p> <p>Focus on processes</p> <p>Curriculum Knowledge (i3,i4,i5)</p> <p>Inf gap activities to focus on meaning</p> <p>Knowledge from book</p> <p>Knowledge from experience</p> <p>Knowledge of learners (i3,i4)</p> <p>Belief in helping SS with the learning process</p> <p>Peer influence (3 March)</p> <p>Specialist influence</p> <p>Belief in the teachers' role as facilitator (i5)</p> <p>Belief in the teachers' role as counsellor</p> <p>Belief in correcting students' mistakes</p> <p>Belief in promoting self-correction</p> <p>Belief in promoting self learning</p> <p>Belief in team work to promote good relationships</p> <p>Belief in pair work to have students help each other</p> <p>Belief in students discovering grammar structures</p> <p>Belief in learning by using and being exposed to the language</p> <p>Belief in focusing English classes on their objectives</p>	<p>Using Previous knowledge (i1,i4)</p> <p>Practical knowledge (i4)</p> <p>Belief in self correction</p> <p>Experience as source of belief in self correction</p> <p>Belief & knowledge mixture</p> <p>Influence of personality</p> <p>ELT Course as source of knowledge</p> <p>Self correction</p> <p>BA as source of knowledge/ experience as source of belief (i2,i4)</p> <p>BA in ELT as source of knowledge</p> <p>NOTE: Narrative vs Paradigmatic knowledge (Johnston & Goettsch 2000 p 460</p> <p>General to specific approach (i3,i4)</p> <p>Belief in General to specific approach</p> <p>Personal learning style influence</p> <p>Knowledge of learners</p> <p>Learning experience influence (i3,i4) /</p> <p>Belief from teaching experience</p> <p>BA in ELT as source of knowledge</p> <p>Personal learning style influence</p> <p>Teaching experience as source of knowledge</p> <p>Belief in the teacher's role as a guide (i5)</p> <p>Belief in repetitions and modelling</p> <p>Belief in enjoying learning</p> <p>Belief in teaching starting from words?</p> <p>Belief in teaching starting from small pieces of language?</p> <p>Belief in learning by using and interacting with the language</p> <p>Belief in pair and group work</p> <p>Belief in communication as the focus of English classes</p>	<p>Practice of grammar (i1,i3)</p> <p>Belief in meaningful activities</p> <p>Learning experience influence (i4)</p> <p>Conception of meaningful Curriculum knowledge</p> <p>Knowledge of learners(i3,i4)</p> <p>Learning experience influence</p> <p>Belief in meaningful activities (i4)</p> <p>Importance of meaningful activities</p> <p>Curriculum knowledge</p> <p>Belief in teacher's role as facilitator/ roles according to the lesson (i5)</p> <p>Belief in students' active role</p> <p>Belief in explaining as main teaching action</p> <p>Belief in communication as the focus of English classes</p> <p>Belief in teaching the four skills using students' context</p> <p>Belief in using interaction patterns according to activities</p>	<p>Belief in playing music while ss work</p> <p>Learning experience influence</p> <p>Eliciting</p> <p>Practical knowledge</p> <p>Experience as source of knowledge</p> <p>NOTE: Narrative vs Paradigmatic knowledge (Johnston & Goettsch 2000 p 460</p> <p>Using SS personal information</p> <p>BA in ELT as source of knowledge</p> <p>Conception of meaningful</p> <p>Reading aloud</p> <p>Experience as source of knowledge</p> <p>Repetition drill</p> <p>ELT course as source of knowledge</p> <p>Description of technique</p> <p>Belief in a technique (i4)</p> <p>Knowledge of learners (i4,i5)</p> <p>Knowledge of context</p> <p>Description of an experience</p> <p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>SS: active participants</p> <p>ELT course source of knowledge</p> <p>Knowledge of learners' needs</p> <p>Knowledge from peers</p> <p>Belief in a technique</p> <p>Experience feedbacks a belief</p> <p>Description of RASSIAS technique</p> <p>Personality as a source of a belief</p> <p>Belief behind teaching activities</p> <p>Belief in the teachers' role as facilitator / guide (i5)</p> <p>Belief in creating positive learning environment</p> <p>Belief in setting classroom rules</p> <p>Belief in the integration of skills</p> <p>Problems in integrating the four skills</p> <p>Belief in the importance of speaking English</p> <p>Belief in encouraging students socialisation</p> <p>Belief in using different interaction patterns in order for students to get to know each other</p> <p>Belief in the importance of having an appropriate classroom</p> <p>Belief in lesson planning</p> <p>Belief in adapting the book and using extra materials</p>

Journal Codes Belief in meaningful activity Belief in group work Theory knowledge as a source of belief Advantage of pair and group work Knowledge of a strategy Belief in using students' previous knowledge Knowledge of learners (2 and 4) Belief in making students feel well prepared BA in ELT as source of knowledge Learning experience behind teaching activity Teaching experience behind teaching activity Belief in collaborative learning Learners and collaborators Materials are tools Communication	Journal Codes Knowledge of a theory Belief in funny active learning Belief in having students use the language Belief in students interaction Students' needs BA in ELT as source of knowledge and teaching experience as source of belief Beliefs in: Students: active participants Materials are tools Communication	Journal Codes Belief in attractive activities Belief in using learners interests Curriculum knowledge Belief in the importance of listening BA in ELT as source of knowledge Learning and teaching experience Beliefs in: Teaching according to students' needs Materials support teaching and learning Communication	Journal Codes Knowledge of learners(1 and 4) Peers as source of knowledge ELT as source of belief Description of information gap activity Curriculum knowledge BA in ELT as source of knowledge Learning experience Belief in active learning environment Beliefs in: Students are active participants Materials are very important Communication in a real world
RECURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES Pair and team work Focus on learning process (steps) Information gap activities Eliciting Checking instruction comprehension Giving students prizes Monitoring	RECURRENT EACING PRACTICES Pair and Team work Repetitions Eliciting Monitoring Encouraging students self correction	RECURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES Using students local contexts Pair and group work Eliciting Monitoring Communicative practice of grammar aspects	RECURRENT EACING PRACTICES Intensive use of materials Using different interaction patterns Repetition and drills Using students' personal information Expanding activities by offering extra information Eliciting Planning Monitoring
IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE Content knowledge PCK Pedagogical knowledge Knowledge of learners Curriculum knowledge Knowledge of context Knowledge of self	IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE Content knowledge PCK Pedagogical knowledge Knowledge of learners Knowledge of self	IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE Content knowledge PCK Limited pedagogical knowledge Knowledge of learners Curriculum knowledge	IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE Content knowledge PCK Pedagogical knowledge Knowledge of learners Curriculum knowledge Knowledge of educational ends Knowledge of self
Common source of knowledge BA in ELT, Propedeutico, (Content knowledge) BA in ELT Teaching experience	Common source of knowledge BA in ELT, Propedeutico, (Content knowledge) Teaching experience Observing Peers ELT education	Common source of knowledge BA in ELT, Propedeutico, (Content knowledge) BA in ELT Learning experience Teaching experience	Common source of knowledge Living in USA (Content knowledge) Mix of sources: ELT education, Teaching experience, Peers and colleagues.
IDENTIFIED BELIEFS English opens doors English learning by using and practicing it Knowing English means being able to socialise	IDENTIFIED BELIEFS Communication as learning and teaching purpose English is learnt by relating it to something meaningful Best way of teaching is	IDENTIFIED BELIEFS English is a tool English is learnt if there is a need The best way of teaching is according to students	IDENTIFIED BELIEFS Communication as learning and teaching purpose English is learnt when there is a need, a goal Best way of teaching is

<p>Teachers transmit knowledge; students develop it</p> <p>Teaching according to students' needs; the best way for each group</p> <p>Students' roles: learners and collaborators</p> <p>Materials as tools</p> <p>English learning purpose is to communicate</p> <p>Collaborative learning</p> <p>Using students' previous knowledge</p> <p>Meaningful activities</p> <p>Creating a positive learning environment by playing music while students work</p> <p>Teacher's role as facilitator</p> <p>Correcting mistakes and promoting self correction as essential teaching technique</p> <p>Promoting self-learning</p>	<p>making it meaningful and according to students</p> <p>Teachers deposit a seed SS make it grow</p> <p>Drills and repetition</p> <p>Pair and group work</p> <p>Eliciting and giving examples</p> <p>Monitoring</p> <p>Teacher's role as a guide</p> <p>Previous knowledge</p> <p>Students' roles: active participants</p> <p>Materials are tools</p> <p>English learning purpose is to communicate</p> <p>SS' needs are very important</p> <p>Making students use the language</p> <p>Joyful active learning</p> <p>Teaching is having fun</p>	<p>Teachers teach according to their beliefs</p> <p>Teachers transmit knowledge to students and they must develop it</p> <p>Meaningful activities</p> <p>Interesting activities for students</p> <p>Listening is very important</p> <p>Variety of interaction patterns</p> <p>Facilitator as main teacher's role</p> <p>SS active participants of their learning</p> <p>Facilitating students' understanding</p> <p>Communication as focus of language learning</p>	<p>mixing approaches according to students profile</p> <p>Teachers transmit knowledge; students develop it</p> <p>Drills and repetition (Rassias techniques)</p> <p>Active learning environment</p> <p>Meaningful activities by using students personal information</p> <p>Forcing students use the language by creating real situations</p> <p>Students' roles: active participants allowed to express their ideas</p> <p>Materials are very important</p> <p>English learning purpose is to communicate in a real world</p> <p>Teaching goes beyond the classroom</p> <p>Teachers' role as facilitator / guide</p> <p>Creating positive learning environment</p> <p>Having a respectful friendly learning environment</p> <p>Setting classroom rules</p> <p>The integration of skills</p> <p>Importance of speaking English</p> <p>Encouraging students' socialisation by having students interact</p> <p>Using different interaction patterns in order for students to get to know each other</p> <p>Importance of having an appropriate classroom</p> <p>Lesson planning</p> <p>Adapting the book and using extra materials</p>
<p>Common source of beliefs</p> <p>1st Teaching experience</p> <p>2nd BA in ELT</p> <p>3rd Personality</p>	<p>Common source of beliefs</p> <p>1st Personality,</p> <p>2nd Language learning</p> <p>3rd Teaching experience</p>	<p>Common source of beliefs</p> <p>1st Learning experience</p> <p>2nd Teaching experience</p>	<p>Common source of beliefs</p> <p>1st Personality</p> <p>2nd teaching experience</p> <p>3rd ELT education</p> <p>4th Language learning experience</p>

Appendix 9

BA IN ELT PROGRAM 2003

BA IN ELT PROGRAM 2012

STRAND	Number of Subjects	Theoretical Hours	Practical Hours	Total Hours	Number of Subjects	Theoretical Hours	Practical Hours	Total Hours
English Skills Development	7	18	10	28	7	17	11	28
Applied Linguistics	5	17	3	20	5	17	0	17
ELT Methods	6	17	9	26	6	27	2	29
Teaching Practice	8	9	42	51	8	4	71	75
Education Studies	10	34	3	37	7	20	11	31
Study Skills	4	7	5	12	3	4	6	10
English Studies	6	17	7	24	4	14	1	15
Spanish	2	7	0	7	1	4	0	4
Elective Focus	4	20	0	20	3	12	0	12
Dissertation Work	1	4	4	8	1	0	15	15
TOTAL	53	150	83	233	45	116	120	236

Appendix A

FULL CASE STUDY FOR PAM

Drawn on the presentation and discussion of findings

1. PAM'S BACKGROUND

Pam is a methodical teacher who discovered that she was good at teaching in high school. She started giving private English classes to children when she was a student of the BA in ELT. Before finishing her BA studies, Pam was hired by a company to teach English to international executives. When Pam finished her BA in ELT and because of the quality of her performance as a student, she was hired as a language teacher to teach English to undergraduate university students.

Pam realises that there are significant differences between teaching in a company and teaching in a university. These differences are at the level of context, students, and language teaching contents. The company she works for is an international company where she teaches English for specific purposes (ESP). She explains that her students are international executives who are dedicated and responsible language students who do not speak Spanish. She does not follow a specific program, adapting her classes to students' current needs. On the other hand, as a university teacher, Pam teaches general English, following a specific language program. In this case, her students are young adult undergraduates, and for many of them studying English is a university requirement.

At the university, Pam gives four English courses, three of them from Monday to Friday and one on a Saturday. The level selected to conduct the observations for this research was English level 2. Pam teaches this level on weekdays and on Saturdays. However, her weekday course is at the same hour as other selected course, thus, I decided to observe her

Saturday course. Since Saturday courses are five-hour classes, we agreed on only an one-hour session would be observed each Saturday, not the whole five-hour class as in the case of Paul.

Concerning the course selected to conduct the observations, it is a group of 20 university students: 9 men and 11 women. They are studying four different majors: Biological Chemical Analysis, Psycho pedagogical Counselling, Graphic Design and Nursing. Their ages are from 19 to 24 years old. All the students have the student book and most of them also have the workbook. However, a few of the students photocopy the workbook pages when the teacher asks them to work with them. The class is conducted in a small university classroom that is crowded with 20 students. It is a little dark and its size limits the movement of the students. The class takes place from 8:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs every Saturday.

The teacher

BA in ELT

English levels taught: Basic and upper intermediate

English types: General English and Business English

School levels taught: University

Places: In a university and in a company

The students

9 men and 11 women university students from 4 different majors: Biological Chemical Analysis, Psycho pedagogical Counselling, Graphic Design and Nursing

Class

English 2

Book: New American Inside Out, Elementary B (MacMillan)

Table 1.1: Pam's background

2. OUTLINES OF THE CLASSES OBSERVED

2.1 Observation 1

The first observation was from 11:00 hrs to 12:00 hrs. The teacher called the roll to start the class again since this session was immediately after a 30 min break. There were 8 men and 9 women sitting in a semicircle. Two students arrived later on. Pam's desk and a chair were full of materials: teacher's books, three different sets of handouts for students and a CD player.

The first session observed consisted of the following activities and teaching practices:

Activity	Teaching practices
1. Students describe rooms in a handout, using there is /are and prepositions working in pairs (e.g. There is a lamp on the table) Information gap act	The Teacher... elicits information through a demonstration act using a book & USB. Where is the USB? It is ... (prepositions) explains act and organises students in pairs gives and checks instructions monitors checks activity & asks for questions has students repeat some voc closes act
2. Students do a fill in act (Handout) using there is/are and prepositions working in pairs	The teacher... organises students in new pairs asks a student to read instructions checks instructions checks vocabulary monitors checks activity & asks for questions
3. Students complete a grammar exercise in the book (p.62)	The teacher... reviews the structure There is/are on the board asks a student to read instructions monitors asks students to check their answers by listening to the recording checks asks students to listen to the recording and repeat

	the statements
4. Students describe the rooms on the cards given by the teacher (information gap activity)	<p>The teacher...</p> <p>explains act</p> <p>organises students in groups</p> <p>gives and checks instructions</p> <p>monitors</p> <p>checks act by asking questions that students should have used</p> <p>asks for students' doubts</p>

Table 1.2: Outline of Pam's class 1

The topic of the five-hour class was hotels, rooms and furniture. The hour session observed was centred on the review of and practice of there is/are, prepositions and related vocabulary. Pam started the session with a review of prepositions using a book and a USB. Then she had students do control and semi control grammar exercises using the book and some handouts. In the last activity, students practiced the grammar structures in a more communicative way. Pam developed a well-structured class where she opened and closed each activity. She checked the comprehension of instructions and she monitored students' work in every stage of the class. Pam organised pair and group work without any problems, having students work with a different classmate in every activity.

2.2 Observation 2

The second observation was also done after the 30 min break from 11:00 hrs to 12:00 hrs; 9 men and 10 women arrived on time for the session. The observed session was composed of the following activities:

Activity	Teaching practices
1. Students listen and read to... A. Identify unknown words	<p>The teacher...</p> <p>elicits students information on being on a diet or</p>

<p>B. Identify the main idea checks comprehension of this step</p> <p>C. Identify advice explains the meaning</p>	<p>doing exercise</p> <p>asks students to open books p 68 (Reading)</p> <p>introduces reading the title</p> <p>explains procedures and writes them on the bb</p> <p>A. The teacher...</p> <p>asks students to underline the unknown words</p> <p>elicits the unknown words and writes them on the board</p> <p>asks students to guess the meaning of the words from the context reading and listening again</p> <p>asks students to identify the line of the word that demonstrates the inferring from context process</p> <p>does the inferring process with students with the 4 unknown words</p> <p>B. The teacher...</p> <p>shows 2 pictures</p> <p>asks if they show the main idea of the text</p> <p>does the process with students by asking them several questions</p> <p>elicits the main idea</p> <p>C. The teacher...</p> <p>elicits the piece of advice</p> <p>elicits students personal information on the topic.</p>
<p>2. Students answer exercise 1 and 2 on page 68</p>	<p>The teacher...</p> <p>asks students to answer exercise 1 p 68</p> <p>explains exercise 2 p. 68</p> <p>checks instructions comprehension</p> <p>monitors</p> <p>has students check by listening to the recording</p> <p>checks answers and elicits reasons</p>
<p>3. Students...</p> <p>(a) answer a survey in the workbook, check their scores, and then discuss their results in their groups</p> <p>(b) Students using 2 questions written on the board talk about their results, explain what they eat and</p>	<p>The teacher...</p> <p>introduces act</p> <p>organizes students in teams</p> <p>explains act (tests magazine)</p> <p>checks the comprehension of the procedures (step</p>

check if they agree. Students talk until the teacher stops music, then they change partners and do the same. Students change partners three times	#1, etc) monitors /plays some music while SS are working reminds students to compare their scores and talk about them asks students to stand up in two lines face to face has students discuss using the two questions on the board has students practice the pronunciation of some words and phrases asks students about their scores and kind of food they eat to close the activity
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Table 1.3: Outline of Pam' class 2

The general topic of the class was food. The session observed was mainly focused on developing reading comprehension. Pam began the session by eliciting students' information on the topic. Then, she guided students through a reading process. During the first stage of the session, she worked closely with students. During the second and third stages, Pam had them work by themselves, instructing and monitoring their work. She had students practice different reading strategies: predicting the content of the text from the title, inferring the meaning of words from context, identifying main ideas and understanding specific information. Overall, Pam developed a class centred on the reading process where students were actively engaged following this process.

2.3 Observation 3

The third observation was from 12:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs. There were 9 men and 11 women. When I arrived, the students were working in pairs, standing up, developing an information gap activity. Pam was monitoring students' practice. She checked the activity asking questions to the whole group. Then, she closed the activity by asking for students' questions.

The third session observed consisted of the following activities:

Activity	Teaching practices
1.Students listen to a conversation and answer exercise 1,2,and 3	<p>The teacher...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces act by eliciting students personal information has students open their books has students look at the picture gives instructions & does the activity with students elicits information on the topic gives instructions (Exercise 2) plays the recording checks the exercise and elicits extra information gives instructions (Exercise 3) has students to listen to buying cloth expressions & repeat them gives instructions and writes the key to answer (C- customer, S- salesperson) on the board monitors checks
2. Students write a conversation similar to the one they listened to using the expressions studied, working in pairs. Then, they present it to the class	<p>The teacher...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives instructions (Exercise 4) checks instructions comprehension asks students to choose a partner (not the person close to them) monitors helping students with vocabulary has pairs read their dialogues in front of the class has students repeat some words and expressions they are having problems with adjectives explains the order of adjectives & nouns (colour. cloth) has students continue presenting their dialogues corrects the pronunciation of some words asks students to clap after each presentation
3. Students listen to a conversation & complete an	The teacher...

exercise in the workbook	gives instructions checks if students need to listen again & plays the recording again checks answers by having a pair of students read the conversation has students repeat the conversation after her
4. Students write a description of a person in a picture	The teacher... asks students to work with the picture she gave them early in the morning (information gap activity) explains activity, gives examples & tells students they can leave the classroom as soon as they finish their description plays some music while students work monitors

Table 1.4: Outline of Pam's class 3

The topic of the five-hour class was physical descriptions and cloth. The session observed was mainly focused on developing listening, speaking and writing skills. In the first and third stages of the class, Pam led students through a listening process working with the whole group. She used the content of the first stage as a model for students to follow in the next step. In the second and fourth activities, she organised students to work in pairs and individually. Her main role was that of the monitor. In general, Pam developed a balanced class that had a process as well as a product focus.

2.4 Observation 4

The fourth observation was done from 9:30 to 10:30. There were 9 men and 10 women. Pam's desk was again full of teaching material. When I arrived, the teacher was checking the activity just done, and then, she clarified students' doubts.

The fourth observed session include the following activities and teaching practices:

Activity	Teaching practices
1. Students play a table game (Goose game) in groups of 4. In order to play students need to describe actions & what people is wearing	<p>The teacher...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains activity gives instructions checks instructions monitors gives an extra point for the oral exam to winners (she stated that at the beginning of the activity)
2.Students practice the listening skill by doing four different exercises in their workbook (p.38)	<p>The teacher...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> elicits students' personal information about their houses gives instructions for exercise 1 and explains some cultural aspects checks instructions has students label the pictures with the words in the box monitors checks activity & explains vocabulary gives instructions for exercise 2 & gives an example checks instructions has students listen to a conversation & complete the missing information has students listen again & check their answers checks exercise by asking questions and eliciting extra information has a student reads instructions has students do exercise 3 by underlining the correct answer has students answer exercise 4 by stating T or F checks exercise 3 with the whole group & elicits

	extra information checks exercise 4 by having students read the statements saying if they are T or F and give reasons
3. Students match questions and answers using pieces of papers working in groups	The teacher... gives instructions (matching game) checks instructions organizes students in groups plays music while students work monitors by going with each group & checking their work

Table 1.5: Outline of Pam's class 4

The five-hour class was divided in two main stages. The first one aimed to review the contents studied and to practice the language skills. In the second stage, students made oral presentations that were part of their partial evaluation as Pam explained:

As today is the exam, they (students) usually feel like nervous and stressed... I try to make the activities as much fun as possible so they can feel relaxed before presenting the exam, but at the same time, that they can practice some of the things that they will need (CS- c4).

The session observed was primarily focused on the practice of speaking and listening skills. The first and third activities were students centred. In the first activity, students practiced asking questions and describing actions and people's clothes, through the Goose game, working in groups. Pam gave the winners an extra point for the oral exam. The second activity was centred on developing a listening process guided by the teacher. She expanded the listening exercises by explaining cultural aspects and eliciting extra information and the reasons behind students' answers. In the third activity, the students matched questions and answers reviewing what they had seen in the previous classes. They worked in small groups

that were monitored by the teacher. Overall, Pam developed a session where students were not only relaxed but also busily working.

3. ANALYSIS OF PRACTICES

3.1 Teaching practices

Through the observations made to Pam's classes, it was identified that her most common teaching practices were (1) checking instruction comprehension, (2) using different interaction patterns, (3) working on the development of skills processes, (4) applying information gap activities and (5) rewarding students.

Teaching practice 1: Checking instructions comprehension

Pam checked that students understood her instructions every time she introduced an activity in the class. She checked them in different ways, for example, asking students what they are going to do, asking students to explain the instructions or asking for an example. She checked the comprehension of instructions even when some of them seemed simple.

Knowledge and beliefs in Pam's practice

It could be argued that Pam's recurrent practice of checking students' comprehension of instructions was originated by the problems she faced at the beginning of her teaching practice as well as by her experience as a teacher since she explained:

I do it because in my very first classes when I gave instructions I didn't ask them and at the end they did something very different. That's why I always try to check if they understand, and usually that is the part that I let them speak

Spanish... And they tell me what they have to in Spanish, so I can know if they understood... and maybe the ones that didn't, they now understand, that's why I check them (CS2- c3).

She also underlined:

Now that I am a teacher, I know that some things work better like checking instructions... (CS2-r1).

It could be considered that the awareness of the importance of checking instructions that Pam has reached through her teaching experience has reinforced her pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 2004). Nevertheless, at times, it appears a mechanical behaviour rather than a conscious teaching act because she checks instructions usually in the same way and even when they seem very simple.

Teaching practice 2: Using different interaction patterns

In all the classes observed Pam exhibited different interaction patterns in which she privileged working in pairs or teams over individual work. Moreover, she actually stated that these interactions patterns were her favourite type of interactions:

I think that my favourite interaction would be teamwork. I always put them in teams, and I try them to be in different teams every time because I want them to have like a good relationship with all of their classmates in the classroom ... the second one is pair work, and I usually try to put a high level student with a lower level student, so the higher one can teach the lower student so he can receive knowledge not only from me as a teacher (CS2-bi).

Pam's words suggested an interactional view of language in which, language was "a tool for the creation and maintenance of relations" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.21). Pam also said that she liked students work in teams as much as possible. She also explained that

she usually moved students because she wanted all of them to have contact with a different classmate at least once (CS2-c2). Therefore, it can be argued that Pam does not only promote students good relationships but she also encourages learning by having students work in pairs and in teams.

Knowledge behind teaching practice

Pam learned about collaborative learning in her BA in ELT studies and through the development of her BA dissertation. Collaborative learning is regarded as an “extension of the principles of Communicative language teaching” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 193).

I did the thesis of my BA on collaborative learning and... I had one subject. I don't remember exactly which one, that talked ... one of topics was collaborative learning, and how students can learn from other students, and how if you as a teacher organise the students always a higher level student with a lower level student, they... at the end of the course, they can be almost at the same level, so that's why I'm interested in collaborative learning (CS2- c2).

Therefore, the teacher's knowledge of collaborative learning is suggested by her using of pair and team-work teaching practice.

Beliefs behind teaching practice

Pam stated her belief on the advantages of having students work in pairs or teams in the journals she wrote as well as in one of the interviews we had.

I also believe that when students work together is also a benefit for them because they can learn from someone else's experience and/or mistakes. There's an author that says that collaborative learning in which learners depend and are accountable to each other, so in this way the teacher would not be the

only one who provides everything, but also some other students can facilitate knowledge (CS2-j1).

I've always believed in working in teams as a good way of collaborative learning; working together can, in my opinion, increase learning (CS2-r1).

I believe that when one of the students helps another student with a lower level, they don't feel that intimidated as with the teacher... when they have a student that can help them that can explain, that can provide an example of the topic, they can learn through them. That's why I like them to work collaboratively so they learn together and learn from the other students' experiences (CS2-c2).

It could be argued that Pam's use of pair and teamwork is her manner of encouraging collaborative learning. Principles derived from an approach or methods are also found to be the origin of teachers' beliefs. Teachers may be convinced that a specific approach, for example collaborative learning, is the most appropriate way of teaching a foreign language (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006).

Knowledge and beliefs in Pam's practice

It seems that Pam's knowledge of and beliefs about collaborative learning as well as her belief that the "students' roles should be as learners and collaborators that together can construct the knowledge to be able to communicate in English" (CS2-r2) encourage her to have students work in pairs or teams. Moreover, Pam's pedagogical knowledge and her knowledge of students support her in the organisation and monitoring of these interaction patterns.

Both Pam and Paul develop their classes employing pair and teamwork. They, both, also consider that knowing English means being able to communicate in this language. However, they offer distinct rationales for this teaching practice. For example, Paul

considers that promoting students' socialisation in the language classroom is important; whereas, Pam's beliefs about collaborative learning and that students should be collaborators to construct knowledge appear to be her reasons behind this practice. Therefore, it could be said that the same teaching practice is motivated by different reasons.

Teaching practice 3: Applying information gap activities

It was observed that Pam usually employed information gap activities in her English classes. She developed this type of activities for different purposes, such as having students practice and review different grammar structures and functions.

For the speaking one I have this, they have to describe and find differences in two pictures... and I have this one also, where students will have different pictures, and they also have to compare the pictures by describing them (CS2-c1).

For this session, Pam planned two information gap activities where students practice making descriptions and comparisons in an oral form.

Knowledge behind teaching practice

Pam said that she became aware of this type of activity through the textbooks she followed when teaching English at the university. She explained that the teacher's book included tips and advice on using different activities, and that it had a resource pack with activities, information gap activities being the most common ones (CS2- c3). Thus, it could be argued that the teacher transformed the information obtained through this type of activity into knowledge through planning and teaching her university English classes.

In addition, it appears that Pam's teacher knowledge base has been strengthened by her teaching practice since the selection, organisation and development of information gap activities indicate her pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as well as her pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge includes aspects, such as organization of learning, maximizing resources and time and encouraging participation (Tsui, 2003).

Beliefs behind teaching practice

Pam regarded information gap activities as important because they promote meaningful learning, which makes the language learning process easier for students (CS2-c1). She also stated that she used this type of activity because they not only involved words but they also gave meaning to what students were asking or saying (CS2-c3). Moreover, Pam explained that she developed this kind of belief through her teaching practice since she noticed that when activities involved information students needed to use and exchange, they remembered it, and which she thought made practicing with it easier (CS2-c1).

Knowledge and beliefs in Pam's practice

Pam's pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of learners (Shulman, 2004) seem to be suggested by her application of information gap activities because she selected them according to students' characteristics. In addition, the belief she has developed about this type of activity through successful teaching experiences encourages her to continue using them (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006). Teachers' classroom actions are underpinned by their beliefs about what it means to know a language and about best ways of teaching and learning it (Nunan, 2004). Therefore, Pam's belief that the purpose of learning English should be that students be able to express themselves and communicate with others in the second language (CS2-r2) may also reinforce her recurrent application of information gap activities.

Teaching practice 4: Working on the development of skills processes

It was observed in three of Pam's classes how carefully she guided students through language skills development processes. For example, on the second class observed, Pam guided students first, to identify unknown words, then to infer their meaning through context, and then to identify the main ideas of the paragraphs, finally to get specific information. She attentively led students through reading and listening comprehension processes. She did not only have students employ different reading and listening strategies but she also provided students examples of the application of these strategies as it can be detected in her following words:

Sometimes they (students) think they read, but they don't really get the idea of what they are reading, that's why I try to have different stages through the reading... maybe they, first identify the words they don't know, then look at the paragraphs, the structure of the readings... And at the end they come up with the idea, what the reading is about, what the author or the writer is trying to say... (CS2-c3).

Pam added that by having students develop language skills processes, they did not just read or listen to words but they understood what they were reading or listening to (CS2-c3). Thus, understanding of text meaning by students appears to be highly important for Pam.

Knowledge behind teaching practice

Pam explained that she learnt how to guide students through skills development processes in her BA in ELT studies. First, she experienced these processes as language learner in the first semesters of the BA, and then she was taught how to use different strategies in the teaching of language skills.

I learnt them mainly in the major when I was in 'Propedeutico' (a year focused on English learning)... I had a subject that was reading... they taught us to

identify main ideas, to guess the meaning words from other words in the reading... and then in the major, when we had the teaching subjects, they taught us some skills and strategies that can be applied in those skills. I think that the subject was 'Estrategias de Enseñanza' (Teaching strategies) (CS2-c2).

Pam started learning English in the Propedeutic year of the BA in ELT. Therefore, it could be thought that Pam developed her content knowledge (Shulman, 2004) during her university studies. In the teaching of English as a foreign language, this type of knowledge includes both knowledge about English and the teacher's English proficiency (Randall and Thornton, 2001).

Beliefs behind teaching practice

As Pam stated above, she experienced working on language skills processes when she learnt English. One of the sources of teachers' beliefs is the teachers own experience as language learners when teachers' beliefs about teaching mirror their experience as language learners (Borg, 2003; Senior, 2006; Pachler et al., 2007).

In addition, Pam regarded focusing in skills processes as important because it was a way of making students aware of the fact that every activity they did had a purpose as well as a way for them to realise that they were learning.

I want them to be clear that each activity has like a purpose... and for me the process... it makes me know or be sure that they understand... Ah, in that way we can move together and move on to the next stage or the next activity. If I see they didn't get the first thing, for me is a sign that I can't move, so that's why I have the process... even though if it's a normal simple activity, it needs to have a process... Also, the process... it's like a way they can realize, at least that's what I believe, that they are learning (CS2-vi).

For Pam, it is also a way of being sure that students understand, and knowing if she can move on the next stage or not (CS2-vi) as the above statement shows.

Knowledge and beliefs in Pam's practice

It could be said that the way Pam approaches the teaching of language skills illustrates her content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 2004). Moreover, her knowledge of the exams that students have to take, which is part of her curriculum knowledge (Shulman, 2004), seems to drive her to pay attention to the practice of language skills. For example, Pam explained that she selected a listening activity because of the following:

In the exam they (students) have a listening section where they have to answer comprehension questions; they need to look for listening for specific information... to listen and identify some things in the conversation mmm...what the speakers are refereeing to, that's why I choose the listening from the workbook" (CS2-c4).

Pam also had students work on the development of language skills because of the TOEIC exams as it can be read in her following words:

Basically because in the TOEIC exam that they (students) do for the accreditation, they have that section, and I want them to be able to identify like points of view, meanings of words, and the author's or the writer's main idea because that's what they are testing when they present their TOEIC exam (CS2-c3).

Additionally, Pam's decision on working on language skills processes seems to be based on various beliefs that Pam has expressed. For example, she stated that language learning was the result of a process and that teachers' main role was that of facilitator.

I think it (teacher's role) would be first like the facilitator, teacher should facilitate students learning... students then need to discover, and I am here just to help them understand" (CS2-bi).

Furthermore, Pam acknowledged that she did not really know if her way of proceeding, going gradually was developed through her BA studies or it was her natural way of doing things.

I have two theories, one is that I learned it here in the BA in ELT in my classes here in the university, the other theory is that it is my natural way of doing things... something I developed unconsciously by working... it's like my own personality, I'm gonna do this first, then this... (CS2-vi).

Pam's beliefs and personal characteristics appear to lead her meticulous guidance of students through skills development process making this approach to skill teaching a characteristic of her teaching practice.

Teaching practice 5: Rewarding students

Through Pam's classes, I could observe that she gives different types of rewards to students, for example, she usually asked students to applaud classmates' performance. She also gave some candy to students and even, some extra points to be considered in their speaking term evaluation.

Every time that we do a review, in this case the day of the exam, I give them a green sticker. It's an extra point in the speaking exam where they can get like a backup if they are nervous or forget what they have to say (CS2-c4).

The teacher explained that it was in the reviews where students could get extra points (CS2-c4).

Knowledge behind teaching practice

It appears to be that Pam became aware of this type of practice through her teaching experience as she said that a teacher had advised her to give students extra points for specific parts of their evaluations during reviews. She also commented that a colleague told her about the benefits of having candy before exams:

I remember one teacher suggested me that in the reviews we can give points for a specific kind of evaluation, this time it was in the speaking one. That is why I do it. The candy, because I heard from one of my colleagues, I don't remember if she was a psychologist or something like that, that when they eat candy before an exam, something happens with their brains... they activate their brains (CS2-c4).

Beliefs behind teaching practice

Pam thought that giving students extra points or some candy as a reward was a way of encouraging them to work harder and participate in class as her following statements illustrates:

I think it is like encouragement for them, so they can look for something in the activity, not just doing the activity because they have to, but they can win something... that's why I did it (CS2-c4).

Actually when they are doing the exam I'm gonna give to the ones that didn't have one, a candy, so all of them can have at least that thing to activate their brains (CS2-c4).

Moreover, since Pam considers encouraging students to continue working important and regards their participation as vital for the development of the class, she uses different strategies for these purposes such as giving them extra points (CS2-vi).

Knowledge and beliefs in Pam's practice

It could be argued that the contradictory teaching experience that Pam has had from teaching dedicated international executives to teaching undergraduate university students that study English as a university requirement, have led her to search for ways of encouraging students work. It can be said that Pam gives students specific things as a reward because she has found this strategy successful. The positive reaction from her students towards this action has motivated Pam to continue taking advantage of it (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Senior, 2006).

3.2 Overview of Pam's classes

The observations done to Pam's classes illustrated that she developed well-planned and methodical classes where openings and closings of activities as well as the checking of instructions seemed to be fixed patterns in her teaching. Pam created an encouraging working environment where students appeared disposed to participate. The focus of her classes varied; they focused on process, product or students. She focused on process guiding students' work on the development of language skills. She centred her classes on product to make students master specific grammar structures and functions. She also centred her teaching on students when she directed her teaching to respond to their students' needs as well as to encourage their independent work.

Pam shared some common teaching practices with Paul, however, they stated distinct reasons for their actions. For example, both of them played music while students work. Nevertheless, Paul based his decision on a positive learning experience since he considered that listening to music would help him concentrate when studying (CS2-c1); whereas, Pam played music to support the learning of those students with musical intelligence (Garner, 1993b) as well as a means of creating a comfortable working environment (CS2-c4).

In addition, the observations, teacher's journals, conversations and interviews conducted with Pam suggested that Pam's teacher knowledge base (Shulman, 2004) that informed her teaching practices was composed by different interrelated knowledge categories. Her subject content knowledge was the means and object of her classes. Pam's classes were conducted in English; Spanish was seldom used. Pam's pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) allowed her to identify forms of representation and manners of making content accessible to students. Her pedagogical knowledge supported Pam to organise and manage teaching resources as well as the group. She encouraged students' participation and involved all of them in the class work. Her knowledge of learners and curriculum knowledge helped her in the selection and adaptation of materials and activities to respond to students' wants and needs as well as to reach the objectives of the program. Pam's knowledge of educational contexts was also part of her teacher knowledge base which permitted her to realise the differences of teaching English to undergraduate Mexican students in a university from teaching to international business executives in a company.

Pam's recurrent practices: (1) checking instruction comprehension, (2) using information gap activities, (3) organising pair and team work, (4) focusing in skills language development and (5) rewarding students appear to be also informed by her main beliefs that (a) English is learnt by using and practicing it, (b) learners and collaborators are the main students' roles whereas facilitator should be the main teacher's role, (c) collaborative learning is significant in language teaching, (d) the purpose of English learning is being able to communicate as well as (e) knowing English means being able to socialise.

Additionally, it could be said that Pam's beliefs are rooted in her teaching experience, BA in ELT studies and her personal characteristics. Furthermore, her personal characteristics may lead her way of teaching in general.